

Studying and Conserving Paintings

Occasional
Papers
on the
Samuel H.
Kress
Collection

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ON THE COVER: detail of *View of the Molo*, Canaletto, ca. 1725.
Oil on canvas, 26¹/₂ × 32³/₄ in. (67.3 × 83.2 cm).
Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, South Carolina,
Samuel H. Kress Collection (CMA 1954.44).

*The identification of the medium throughout this volume in some cases is conjectural,
based on its visual characteristics and published analyses of other works by the artist.*



Mario Modestini ca. 1950 treating *Hagar and the Angel* by Bernardo Strozzi, today found in the Kress Collection at the Seattle Art Museum. Mr. Modestini's decades of service to the Kress Collection and his vast knowledge have inspired us all.

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Overview

The Samuel H. Kress Collection: Conservation and Context

Marilyn Perry

President, Samuel H. Kress Foundation

OLD MASTER PAINTINGS SURVIVE to us as fragile remnants of former worlds, where once they served a specific purpose—to evoke religious devotion, to capture the image of a beloved face, to illustrate a moral tale on a piece of furniture—in lives and settings from which they are long removed. Centuries of changing owners and evolving uses obscure their history and dim their original luster and meaning. Eventually, they are vulnerable to being treasured in a kind of half-light, as lost and mysterious objects of faded beauty and mystery.

To re-illuminate Old Master paintings requires the professional skills of art conservators and art historians. Painstaking conservation relieves a picture of grime and damage, recapturing the appearance the artist intended and often explaining the means by which it was achieved. Painstaking historical research reveals elements of the identity of the work of art, including why and where it was painted, by whom and for whom, how it was viewed by its first audience. Together, the conservator and the historian craft what might be called the biography of the object, bringing it out of the shadows and into the realm of understanding where its uniqueness can touch our lives.

The papers in this book record these processes, with an emphasis on the elements of discovery that accompany paintings conservation. They are published to share these discoveries, and to mark the first decade of the Kress Program in Paintings Conservation, a program of advanced training in Old Masters conservation sponsored by the Kress Foundation at the Conservation

Center of the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University. All of the paintings discussed in this volume are today enfolded in the Samuel H. Kress Collection, and have, in effect, arrived at the end of their historical wanderings as part of the permanent holdings of one of the eighteen Kress Regional Collections. They are selected for presentation on the basis of interest for the serious student of the field, from more than 100 paintings in the Kress Collection that have thus far been treated through the program.

The publication is divided into two complementary parts. The first provides a broad and valuable overview of historic approaches to the conservation of European paintings, including two papers related to the conservation history of the Kress Collection, which was formed between 1929 and 1961. The remainder of the book is devoted to information gained in the process of conserving specific Italian and Dutch Old Masters, a combination of scientific and humanistic research that opens new avenues for understanding the work of art, its history, and the original context to which it belonged. All of the papers were contributed by individuals associated with the Kress Program in Paintings Conservation during its first ten years. The book is sponsored by the Kress Foundation in celebration of these achievements, and also in demonstration of the vision that guides Kress philanthropy.

The Samuel H. Kress Foundation has focused on European art and architecture for seventy-five years. Across the United States, museums possess masterpieces from the vast Kress Collection—more than 3,000 European paintings, sculptures, bronzes, drawings, and works of decorative art.¹ In Europe and the Mediterranean region, the Foundation has regularly sponsored the preservation of archaeological sites and architectural monuments²—i.e., the settings for which portable art was created. And since the early 1960s, a program of fellowships and broad support for the essential tools of academic and scientific research has underwritten the training of more than 4,000 art historians, conservators, and preservationists, and the archives, databases,

photography, publications, and conferences that sustain careers dedicated to European art.³

These constituencies often converge, as in the Kress Program in Paintings Conservation, where the dual purpose has been to support the advanced training of talented paintings conservators and to provide appropriate conservation treatment for Old Master paintings in the Kress Regional Collections. Selected works of art are shipped to the Conservation Center (shipping, insurance, and photography are paid by the museum) for conservation treatment by Kress Conservation Fellows under the supervision of Dianne Dwyer Modestini, the consultative conservator of the Kress Collection, and the active interest of Mario Modestini, who guided the Foundation's conservation program in the 1950s. For the Fellows, the opportunity to work closely with experts on a significant range of European paintings offers unparalleled hands-on professional experience. As a further component, the program maintains an inventory of the condition of objects in the Kress Collection, insuring a consistency of approach based on previous conservation history that is also unusual. The rigorous nature of the training and the emphasis on art historical research as well as scientific testing have resulted in the recovery of many beautiful European paintings, some of which—as indicated in the papers that follow—have also recovered significant elements of their history and meaning.

Which brings us full circle to the Kress Foundation's larger programmatic goals. As custodians of European art, we recognize the value inherent in comprehending as much as possible about the original place and purpose for which centuries-old works of art were created. Kress grants are directed, from many points of view, toward this end, which we call *The Art of Europe in Context*. The papers in this volume are a signal contribution. We salute all of the individuals who have made the first decade of the Kress Program in Paintings Conservation an enduring success. The paintings, the museums, the conservators, and the public have all benefited.

NOTES

1. For a history of the creation and distribution of the Kress Collection, see Marilyn Perry, “The Kress Collection” in Chiyo Ishikawa et al. (eds.), *A Gift to America: Masterpieces of European Painting from the Samuel H. Kress Collection* (exhib. cat.). New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994, pp. 12–39.
2. From 1929 to the mid-1980s, the Foundation sponsored the preservation of sites in Italy, Greece, Germany, France, Spain, and Ireland. In 1987, the Kress Foundation European Preservation Program was created with the World Monuments Fund to offer competitive incentive grants. To date, this program has aided more than 250 sites in 49 countries. Surveys of the funded projects are available from the Kress Foundation.
3. An overview of the first forty years of the program—*Launching Careers in Art History and Conservation: The Kress Fellowship Program 1962–2002*—was published by the Kress Foundation in 2003.



The Samuel H. Kress Program in Paintings Conservation at the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Margaret Holben Ellis

Professor of Conservation

Sherman Fairchild Chairman, 1987–2002

Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

IN ORDER TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE of its location in New York City, the curriculum of the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, needs to be responsive to the constantly changing resources around it: the availability of visiting conservators, the arrival of a new piece of scientific equipment in a nearby laboratory, and the never-ending succession of museum exhibitions and their adjunctive “special projects,” for which an extra set of hands or the inquiring mind of a conservation student is needed. Not only must courses at the Center adapt to local developments and opportunities, but they also need to accommodate broad philosophical shifts in the conservation profession at large. Such was certainly the case at the Conservation Center in the late 1980s and specifically within the discipline of paintings conservation, which had weathered a decade of highly charged debate over the extent and nature of picture cleaning. In general, it was argued that while the so-called “objective” method of cleaning paintings minimized the imposition of passing aesthetic tastes on how a picture looked, one example being the sweet-faced Italian Renaissance Madonnas favored by restorers and their clients at the turn of the nineteenth century, the resulting visual discord between damaged and intact passages was distracting and even farther removed from the painting’s original appearance, much less one appropriate to its age. In other words, because a picture does not change in appearance via any consistent progression, the “what you see is what you get” end product of such a cleaning rarely invokes the originally intended effect.

Instead, the lines of reasoning went, a conservator should partially or selectively remove discolored varnish and more fully reintegrate discordant passages through inpainting and the limited application of glazes and toned varnishes. The final “look” of the painting, therefore, reflects the prevailing aesthetic of the period in which it was created, its original function, under what conditions and circumstances it was viewed, and most importantly bears witness to the fact that the painting has aged in a unique and irreversible way, but can still be enjoyed as a unified work of art.

In acknowledging this shift in the profession, John Brealey, a leading proponent of the “humanist” approach to cleaning paintings, began teaching graduate students at the Conservation Center soon after his appointment in 1975 as Chairman of the Paintings Conservation Department of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In 1980, Dorothy Mahon, also of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, joined the faculty. In 1986, the Conservation Center retained Charles von Nostitz, a leading conservator of European Old Master paintings, to assist Professor and Chairman Lawrence Majewski in the instruction of paintings conservation. Dianne Dwyer Modestini quickly followed in 1989, and in 1990 George Bisacca, an expert in the structure of panel paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, began to teach in the newly revamped course, Technology and Structure of Works of Art, part of the “core” curriculum of the Conservation Center.

Concurrently, as described in Dr. Marilyn Perry’s foreword, the Kress Foundation had expressed concerns as early as 1983 regarding the condition of the paintings that had been distributed to Kress Regional and Study Collections around the United States. While many remained sound and required only superficial cosmetic attention, many older restorations had made the works unexhibitable because of thick, yellowed varnishes and unsightly passages of discolored retouching. Structural problems were also identified in wood panel paintings, such as flaking paint, which had been exacerbated by fluctuating environmental conditions.

Thus, it was in the fall semester of 1990, that a pilot course for the conservation of Kress Collection paintings was incorporated into the curriculum of the Conservation Center. Several paintings from Kress Regional and Study Collections came to East 78th Street to be cleaned and treated by graduate students under the supervision of Dianne Dwyer Modestini. Her intimate knowledge of the Kress paintings combined with her considerable experience in training young conservators enabled her to tailor treatments to fit each student’s level of skill. Continued collaboration with the Institute’s art history faculty was bolstered by the presence at the Conservation Center of Kress Collection paintings, which lent themselves to object-based study. Cooperating museums, in return, not only received treatments of the highest quality, but also all supporting documentation, including art historical and technical analyses.¹

At the end of this trial course, it was concluded that, while the treatments were eminently successful, two semesters were required for the students to complete their work. Accordingly, a proposal was submitted to the Foundation requesting that a Post Graduate Fellowship be established in order to provide full-time on-site supervision for two consecutive semesters. On May 29, 1991 the Board of Trustees of the Kress Foundation approved the establishment of a Post Graduate Fellowship for Advanced Training in Paintings Conservation, a position whose roles and responsibilities would be transformed over the following decade to meet the changing needs of the program.^{2,3} Kress Post Graduate Fellows have been responsible for assisting other conservation faculty, teaching small topical workshops, organizing new courses, overseeing the mechanics of arrival, uncrating and documentation of Kress Collection paintings, assisting in the selection of paintings for treatment, monitoring Kress Regional and Study Collections, and recommending the purchase of several pieces of equipment to facilitate treatments and insure the safety of the students.⁴ In return, the Fellows have attended numerous lectures both in conservation and art

history, gained experience in panel work on selected Kress paintings, and traveled abroad to attend workshops and undertake related studies.⁵

Students enrolled in the Kress Program in Paintings Conservation have benefited directly from the noteworthy paintings in Kress Regional and Study Collections. Their treatments and research have led to presentations at graduate student and professional conferences and have also served as topics for Qualifying Papers required for the Institute's rigorous Master's Degree in Art History. Especially meaningful for the students has been the presence of the beloved Mario Modestini, who has shared his extensive knowledge and expertise on Italian paintings, from the primitives through the Renaissance and, in particular, on gold-ground tempera paintings, a rare attribute among American conservators and only slightly less so worldwide. This aspect of the program is especially relevant to the Kress Collection since the majority of over 500 early Italian paintings have gold grounds or some form of gold embellishment. The students and Fellows have been privileged to work alongside one of the greatest restorers of the past century.

Graduates of the Kress Program in Paintings Conservation have gone on to work in museums and private studios both in this country and abroad, including the Museum of Modern Art, Los Angeles County Museum, Guggenheim Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore Museum of Art, North Carolina Museum of Art, Kimball Art Museum, J. Paul Getty Museum, National Gallery of Art, Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam), Öffentliche Kunstsammlung (Basel), Fondation Beyeler (Basel), Hamilton Kerr Institute (Cambridge), Uffizi Galleries (Florence), Louvre (Paris), and the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna), among others.

Now in its fifteenth year, the Samuel H. Kress Program in Paintings Conservation has become an essential component of the Conservation Center's curriculum. Its benefits to graduate art history and conservation students, Institute of Fine Arts faculty, Post Graduate Fellows, and participating

Kress Regional and Study Collections are well documented. Word of the program has spread throughout the museum and conservation communities with the result that well-qualified undergraduates and Fellowship candidates are applying to the Conservation Center to avail themselves of this unparalleled educational opportunity. Today, the results of the Foundation's unflagging commitment to the Kress Collection and its longstanding support of the Conservation Center are visually delighting museum visitors across the country, informing technical art history and connoisseurship studies, and educating the eyes and hands of the conservators who will preserve similar artistic treasures in the future.

NOTES

1. Museums are responsible for costs associated with packing, shipping, insurance, materials, and photography.
2. Annette Rupprecht 1991–1995
Jennifer Sherman 1994–2000
Friederike Steckling 1998–2000
Molly March 1999–2002
Sue Ann Chui 2001–2002
Nica Gutman 2002–2005
3. In order to better reflect the responsibilities of the Kress Post Graduate Fellow the title of the position has been changed to Associate Conservator for the Kress Program in Paintings Conservation.
4. The Samuel H. Kress Foundation generously funded equipment purchases separately.
5. The Samuel H. Kress Foundation provided financial assistance to the Fellows for supplemental studies.



Introduction to the Volume

Michele Marincola

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THIS COLLECTION OF FIFTEEN PAPERS will, we hope, be the first in a series of occasional papers devoted to technical studies of the Kress Collection. Recent graduates and faculty of the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, as well as scholars in the fields of art history and paintings conservation have contributed to this volume. Much of their research was prompted by questions that arose during treatment of the paintings at the Conservation Center, and the resulting papers are grouped around two major themes of interest to the field of paintings conservation. The first, the history of conservation, is a topic whose increasing exploration gives an indication of the maturation of our profession. Conservation history as a formal study has been taken up by a number of researchers in the United States and abroad; seminal texts in the development of modern conservation theory are to be found in the 1996 volume of *Readings in Conservation* published by the Getty Conservation Institute.¹ Since 1975 there have been publications from the Working Group of the International Council of Museums—Committee for Conservation (ICOM-CC) devoted to conservation history, and more recently, the topic was a focus of the 2003 American Institute for Conservation annual meeting, inviting papers in the field of paintings by (among others) Elizabeth Darrow and Wendy Partridge.² Certain to become a definitive textbook on the subject is the new *Readings in Conservation* anthology, *Issues in the Conservation of Paintings*, which contains a wide range of historical and contemporary writings.³ In Europe, N.S. Brommelle,⁴ Michael von der Goltz,⁵ Christine Sitwell,⁶

and Sylvie Béguin de Sudurat, among many others, have published significant accounts of paintings conservation history. Here in the U.S. the oral history projects of the International Museum of Photography and Film⁷ and the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation have gathered the professional histories of American conservators and scientists. In the specific field of paintings, the Yale University symposium concerning the treatment history of the Jarvis Collection,⁸ and the conservators Jean Portell, Rebecca Rushfield, Eric Gordon,⁹ Katie Swerda¹⁰ and Joyce Hill Stoner, have all made important contributions to the record of American conservation history. This volume offers three papers that further expand our critical knowledge in this area, as reflected through the lens of the early Italian picture collection of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation.

Wendy Partridge (IFA/CC 1999), a paintings conservator and scholar of conservation history, presents a comparison of two nineteenth-century philosophies towards the treatment of early Italian paintings that will prove useful to readers who wish to look beneath the overblown rhetoric of recent restoration controversies. Partridge's well-balanced paper contrasts Eastlake's approach to paintings as aesthetic objects requiring interpretation (cleaning and sometimes extensive retouching), with Cavalcaselle's reluctance to compensate for loss lest the inpainting interfere with the historical record of the object. These issues continue to engage museum curators and conservators today when they contemplate the treatment of a painting.

Ann Hoenigswald and Dianne Dwyer Modestini present two important chapters in American paintings conservation history that relate directly to the Kress Collection. Hoenigswald has written the first history of Stephen Pichetto and his role as a picture restorer in New York City and Washington, D.C. during the first half of the twentieth century. Her account of this restorer, who operated a large and active workshop that left its mark on thousands of pictures, fills a significant gap in the history of the painting

collection formed by Samuel H. and Rush Kress. As Hoenigswald writes, Pichetto fulfilled a number of roles for the Kress brothers: restorer, acquisitions advisor, connoisseur, researcher, collections care manager and installation designer. Mario and Dianne Dwyer Modestini offer the next chapter in the history of conservation at the Samuel H. Kress Foundation: Mario's role as its curator and conservator, called to New York by Rush Kress after Pichetto died in 1949. In a charming, first-person narrative told to his wife Dianne, who is paintings conservator for the Kress Collection and adjunct professor at the Conservation Center, Mario, the "lone survivor of those years," recounts his life in New York, Washington and the Pocono Mountains working on the Collection. From his first amusing description of cleaning a Paolo di Giovanni Fei to "show what he could do"—using a mixture of Pond's cold cream, Marseilles soap and linseed oil—to his collaborations with the scientist Robert Feller on field trials of new inpainting media and varnishes, we are captivated by his ingenuity, immense skill and professional modesty.

The second gathering of papers explores the interrelated themes of technical study and treatment. The Kress paintings discussed in this section are by Italian masters, with one exception—a paper on the techniques in the late paintings of Nicolaes Maes. They are presented in chronological order, beginning with a panel from the Trecento and ending with Guardi's *View of the Grand Canal with Dogana*. In most cases, a discovery about or reconsideration of a picture occurred because it was undergoing examination and treatment at the Conservation Center as part of a class in the Kress Program in Paintings Conservation. The students established the condition of the paintings and identified materials used in their making and subsequent repair, both necessary steps in formulating a treatment approach. Analysis was also carried out in the service of technical connoisseurship, or, as it is sometimes called, technical art history,¹¹ the discipline within art history in which physical data gathered from works of art are applied to the study of

workshop practice, authorship, function or original context, and authenticity. As Elise Effmann (IFA/CC 2000) writes in her paper “*View of the Molo: A Canaletto Attribution Reinstated*,” technical studies of individual paintings and artists’ techniques have “been important in establishing a clearer chronology and also in resolving issues of attribution.” Evidence uncovered during cleaning, knowledge accrued from prolonged observation, or a visit from a local scholar, have led the authors to draw new conclusions about the paintings.

Jennifer Sherman (IFA/CC 1997), paintings conservator and adjunct professor at the Conservation Center, combines our two themes in one paper. In her discussion of the Trecento polyptych *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* in the Birmingham Museum of Art attributed to the Goodhart Ducciesque Master, Sherman presents a study of technique and materials that shed light on its now-lost, original appearance. In the course of her paper she considers the more recent history of the picture and the possible role of Icilio Federico Ioni (or Joni), a highly skilled nineteenth-century gilder, restorer and forger. The art historian Charles R. Mack takes as a point of departure the cleaning by Mario and Dianne Dwyer Modestini of the transferred fresco of the *Nativity* by Botticelli (Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, South Carolina), and uses it to re-evaluate the painting and the artist’s workshop practice. In this process, he allows us to see the painting better, with more accuracy: established are Botticelli’s primary role in the execution of the fresco, the participation of workshop assistants (typical for Botticelli, even on so small a work) and the hand of later restorers. Dianne Dwyer Modestini and Mika Okawa present new information uncovered during treatment about the original appearance and later re-use of an early *Descro di Parto* (Birth Tray). Wendy Partridge’s account of the cleaning of six decorative panels based on *The Triumphs of Petrarch* from the Denver Art Museum revealed the richness of the original painting, obscured by layers of thick, yellowed varnish and discolored retouching. As she writes in her paper, the resulting clarification of detail allowed her to determine

the original function of the panels, discuss their possible attribution, and explore occasions for their commission. J.J.G. Alexander, Sherman Fairchild Professor of Fine Arts at the Institute of Fine Arts, saw the paintings at the Conservation Center and identified the tiny coats of arms concealed in two panels as belonging to the Gonzaga and Sforza families, thereby finding internal evidence for the circumstances of its commission.

Comparison of otherwise hard-to-see details in related pictures can often augment traditional methods of art historical analysis. Dianne Dwyer Modestini presents her detailed study of the Sieneese mid-fifteenth-century Kress triptych in El Paso within the context of four similar portable triptychs. Deftly considering the condition, painterly quality, painting technique and punchwork designs in each work, she looks afresh at a thorny problem of attribution among closely related pictures. Professor Modestini also contributes a short note on new thoughts about original context and painting methods that were made possible by the opportunity to study a painting during a conservation treatment—Guidoccio Cozzarelli’s *Scenes from the Life of the Virgin* (Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida). Annette Rupprecht, paintings conservator and Sheri Francis Shaneyfelt, art historian, consider the partially-preserved signature found during cleaning on Princeton University’s *Saint Sebastian*, attributed to the School of Perugino, and tentatively attribute the work to Eusebio de San Giorgio. In her paper, paintings conservator Molly March (IFA/CC 2002) presents a careful reading in its cleaned state of the brushstrokes, color, and layering structure of the Kress Foundation’s *Virgin Reading with Christ Child and Saint John*; her treatment of this picture attributed to the Michelangelo Associate led her to consider this long-overlooked painting in the context of recently cleaned pictures attributed to Michelangelo or his circle. Certain technical details that emerged, such as the distinctive hatch marks visible on this and two other pictures attributed to the same hand, will help scholars assign other paintings, and perhaps even a name, to this anonymous master.

Paintings conservator Laurent Sozzani (with Christopher McGlinchey, Museum of Modern Art conservation scientist and adjunct professor at the Conservation Center) examines a late portrait by the Netherlandish painter Nicolaes Maes in the Columbia Museum of Art. In his thorough examination of this and other pictures by Maes, Sozzani recreates the artist's portrait painting process in its skillful economy and presents an unusual use of a uniform red glaze applied to the background, perhaps unique to this painter, and explains how Maes's rapid application brought intense color and depth to his abbreviated modeling of forms.

Elise Effmann's detailed technical study of the materials and methods of *View of the Molo* is an excellent example of research completed by a conservator trained in art history, and complements perfectly the art historical consideration offered by Katharine Baetjer. The physical proximity of the *View of the Molo* afforded Baetjer, a curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the opportunity to look anew at the picture and reconsider its demotion in the mid-twentieth century to a lesser artist. This re-examination led her to compare the Kress painting with another picture of the same view in Turin, and draw new conclusions about the authorship of the two canvases and their place in the artist's oeuvre. In the final paper, a short study by paintings conservator Helen Spande (IFA/CC 2003) supports the attribution to Francesco Guardi of *View of the Grand Canal with Dogana* in the Columbia Museum of Art through a careful compilation of details not visible to the naked eye; for example, X-radiography of the picture disclosed an entirely unrelated image under the one seen today, evidence of materials recycling and workshop frugality seen on other paintings by the same artist.

This collection of papers will serve not only to re-acquaint us with some of the Kress Collection's Italian paintings at a level of detail not offered before, but as a model for collaboration between art historian and conservator, student and mentor, or scientist and technical art historian. Such interdisciplinary alliances offer the best hope for our

most innovative and rewarding research into the history of art and conservation.

NOTES

1. Nicholas Stanley Price, M. Kirby Talley, Jr., and Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro (eds.), *Readings in Conservation: Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*. Los Angeles, CA: Getty Conservation Institute, 1996.
2. Elizabeth Darrow, "Alchemical transformations: Venice as laboratory for the restorer's art and science" (General Session, p. 4), and Wendy Partridge, "Retouching paintings in Europe from the 15th through the 19th centuries: debates, controversies, and methods" (Paintings Specialty Group Session, p. 29), in *Abstracts of Papers Presented at the 31st AIC Annual Meeting, Arlington, Virginia, June 5–10, 2003*.
3. David Bomford and Mark Leonard (eds.), *Readings in Conservation: Issues in the Conservation of Paintings*. Los Angeles, CA: Getty Conservation Institute, 2004.
4. N.S. Brommelle, "Material for a history of conservation: the 1850 and 1853 reports on the National Gallery," *Studies in Conservation*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (1956), pp. 176–88.
5. Michael von der Goltz, "Is it useful to restore paintings? Aspects of a 1928 discussion on restoration in Germany and Austria" in *Preprints of the ICOM-CC 12th Triennial Meeting, Lyons, August 29–September 3, 1999*. London: James & James, 1999, pp. 200–205.
6. Christine Sitwell and Sarah Staniforth (eds.), *Studies in the History of Painting Restoration*. London: Archetype Publications, 1998.
7. P. Maynes and Grant B. Romer, "Documenting conservation through oral history: a case study" in *Preprints of the ICOM-CC 13th Triennial Meeting, Rio de Janeiro, September 22–27, 2002*. London: James & James, 2002, pp. 172–5.
8. Patricia Sherwin Garland, *Early Italian Paintings: Approaches to Conservation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery, 2003.
9. Eric Gordon, "The restoration history of a late 15th-century German altarpiece and how it reflects philosophical trends in conservation" in *Preprints of the ICOM-CC 13th Triennial Meeting, Rio de Janeiro, September 22–27, 2002*. London: James & James, 2002, pp. 346–51.
10. Katie Swerda, "In their own words: painting conservation and restoration in 19th-century America according to the artists and restorers who recorded their practices and beliefs" in *Preprints of the ICOM-CC 13th Triennial Meeting, Rio de Janeiro, September 22–27, 2002*. London: James & James, 2002, pp. 198–202.
11. David Bomford, "The purposes of technical art history," *IIC Bulletin*, No. 1 (February 2002), pp. 4–7; see also Erma Hermens (ed.), *Looking through Paintings: The Study of Painting Techniques and Materials in Support of Art Historical Research*. London: Archetype Publications, 1998.



Acknowledgements

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Historical Papers



FIG. 1. *Madonna and Child with the Infant Saint John*, Giuliano Bugiardini, 1523–25, tempera and oil on cradled wood panel, 44 1/2 × 32 in. (113 × 81 cm). Allentown Art Museum, Allentown, PA.

Philosophies and Tastes in Nineteenth-Century Paintings Conservation

Wendy Partridge

IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE many of the difficult philosophical questions of the conservation of paintings were articulated and debated in print for the first time. The first of numerous books specifically on the restoration of paintings, Christian Köster's *Über Restaurierung Alter Ölgemälde*, was published in 1827. Previously, limited information on restoration had been available only in treatises on the art of painting.¹ These new writings argued the level to which cleaning should be taken and approaches to the compensation of losses. These issues were related respectively to a redefinition of patina in the nineteenth century² and to the rise of the field of connoisseurship. Major public controversies concerning restoration began to surface at the end of the eighteenth century. In 1796 the Louvre organized an exhibition of half-cleaned paintings to convince the public that the appearance of the paintings was in fact improving with treatment.³ Between 1846 and 1853 the National Gallery, London was at the center of a cleaning controversy that resulted in the House of Commons appointing a select committee to conduct a public inquiry into management practices and cleaning procedures at the Gallery. The committee's interviews with artists, collectors, connoisseurs, and restorers resulted in a 1,100-page report. Although restoration controversies were not new in Europe, they were a new phenomenon in the public domain and a direct result of the recent formation of national museums.⁴

In this environment, the restoration of early Italian paintings seems to have been especially controversial. Since these paintings had been “rediscovered”

after having been mostly ignored by connoisseurs,⁵ their restoration, like their collection and interpretation, was often a subject of heated debate. In this paper I will focus on only a handful of influential collectors, connoisseurs, and restorers of early Italian paintings whose restorations embodied two representative and contrasting approaches.

The attitudes of the first director of the National Gallery, London, Sir Charles Eastlake (1793–1865), and his restorer, Giuseppe Molteni (1799–1867), like Eastlake an academically trained painter, and the director of the Brera Gallery in Milan during his last six years, will be contrasted with those of the art historian Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle (1819–1897). Cavalcaselle studied painting at the Accademia in Venice from 1835 to 1840 and with J.A. Crowe (1825–1896) wrote the enormously influential *New History of Italian Painting* (1864) and *A History of Painting in North Italy* (1871). In the 1870s he was appointed director of the art department for the Ministry of Public Education of the Italian State. In this capacity Cavalcaselle was responsible for major conservation projects at San Francesco in Assisi, the Arena Chapel in Padua, and the Camera degli Sposi in Mantua, among others. His approach to these restoration campaigns could be characterized as archaeological, unlike Eastlake and Molteni's tendency to make additions and "corrections" to paintings to bring them into conformity with contemporary taste and the requirements of nineteenth-century collecting. While Cavalcaselle was primarily concerned with issues of stability and retaining visible distinctions between original and restoration, he was not immune from aspects of the taste of his times, as we shall see below. In general, Molteni and Eastlake saw, and therefore conserved, paintings primarily as aesthetic objects while Cavalcaselle tended to view and treat works of art more as historical documents.

Eastlake's circle consisted of the archaeologist Sir Austen Henry Layard (1817–1894) whose collection of Italian paintings was bequeathed to the National Gallery, London in 1916, and Giovanni Morelli (1819–1891), the Italian collector, connoisseur, and writer of the seminal book on



FIG. 2. *Saint Michael*, Piero della Francesca, 1470, oil on poplar panel (identified), 52³/₈ × 23³/₈ in. (133 × 59.4 cm). National Gallery, London. With the 19th-century restorations.



FIG. 3. *Saint Michael* (fig. 2), with the 19th-century restorations removed.

attribution *Italian Painters: Critical Studies of Their Works*. Morelli and Otto Müндler, the traveling agent for the National Gallery, London, advised Layard and Eastlake on the availability of paintings. From the mid-1850s on, this group met regularly in Molteni's Milan studio where paintings were examined, cleaned, attributed or reattributed, and often restored while waiting for export licenses.⁶ Molteni's restorations, then, were related to the demands of the art market and collecting. They often involved significant intervention and overpainting, a reflection of Eastlake and Layard's discomfort with precise aspects of early, and non-canonical, Italian painting.

The art market played a significant role in restoration done for collectors, and in the nineteenth century we see a continuation of practices that began with the formation of collections in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The poor condition of a painting could be concealed, as it was in Pisanello's *Virgin and Child with Saint George and Saint Anthony Abbot*, purchased by Eastlake in 1858. Eastlake described the painting in his notebook as having a "blue sky almost rubbed to the ground. The armour and dress of St. George once beautifully finished but now almost obliterated."⁷ The present, pristine appearance of the painting is the result of Molteni's interventions. Early Italian paintings were also reformatted to hide the irregular contours that showed they were often fragments of multi-panel religious furnishings. The Crivelli *Pietà* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art is an early example of a fifteenth-century painting in a seventeenth-century, standard Barberini frame. Reformatting probably occurred more frequently in the nineteenth century than before, as a result of the growing demand from new museums and galleries.⁸ For example, Piero della Francesca's *Saint Michael*, now at the National Gallery, London, was part of an altarpiece where the central panel (now lost) is thought to have been a Coronation of the Virgin.⁹ The step and drapery on Saint Michael's right side had to be overpainted by Molteni to disguise a fragmentary appearance (figs. 2 and 3).

A second nineteenth-century phenomenon, at least in Eastlake's circle, was the professional removal of discolored varnish and old restorations to determine attribution. This was connected to the emerging field of connoisseurship. An *Adoration of the Kings* had been attributed to Mantegna, but after Molteni's cleaning, Layard attributed it to Bramantino with Morelli and Eastlake concurring.¹⁰ Or, again, Müндler in 1862 wrote to Molteni concerning a *Virgin and Child with Infant Saint John and Other Saints* that he believed to be by Mantegna despite the objections of both Morelli and Cavalcaselle. Müндler told Molteni, "you alone in the world can give life to [a painting] extinguished by a very wicked restoration which is hiding the author."¹¹

A dramatic example of a restorer revealing paintings that had had their "life extinguished" was Antonio Marini's work on Giotto's wall paintings in the Peruzzi Chapel in Florence. The

paintings had been whitewashed at the end of the eighteenth century, and in 1826 the Peruzzi family was planning a new decorative cycle. However, with the growing popularity of the "primitives," the family decided in 1840 to see if Giotto's old mural cycle could be recovered.¹² The wall paintings were mostly not true fresco, but painted *a secco* in a less stable glue medium. They began to suffer losses during the Renaissance and were probably first restored as early as the last quarter of the fifteenth century.¹³ Marini left the earlier restorations intact and reconstructed only one head of a bearded worthy from the *Ascension of the Evangelist* and the torso of Saint Elizabeth from *The Birth of the Baptist*. He also reinforced the modeling and outlines of the pale images, resulting in a hardening of expression. The face of the viol player in *The Feast of Herod*, for example, was etherealized in the nineteenth-century restoration with a bow mouth and upraised eyes defined by



FIG. 4. *Feast of Herod*, Giotto, 1320, fresco. Peruzzi Chapel, Santa Croce, Florence. Detail, with the 19th-century restorations.



FIG. 5. *Feast of Herod* (fig. 4), detail, with the 19th-century restorations removed.

the new outlines (figs. 4 and 5). Although the restorer could have argued that he was merely replacing lost original work, the overall result seems to emphasize outline in a manner particular to its time. The even, regular contours are reminiscent of William Ottley's linear illustrations for Séroux d'Agincourt's *Histoire de l'Art par les Monuments* (1823), Carlo Lasinio's *Pitture a Fresco del Campo Santo di Pisa* (1832), or John Flaxman's "primitivizing" illustrations of Dante that pay homage to early Italian painting.

A third phenomenon associated with paintings restored under the supervision of Eastlake, Layard, and other nineteenth-century collectors has to do with the "corrections" made over original, undamaged paint. Morelli described Molteni in 1865 as:

a truly outstanding restorer, endowed as he is with a fine artistic sensibility and a passion for ancient art. But because he is a pupil of our Academies he occasionally takes part, just as your excellent Director of the National Gallery [Eastlake] often does, in the battle of the Academies to correct the naïve inaccuracies of the Old Masters, which are almost always the result of their engaging easy-going manner. The naïve imprudence of genius will never be understood by the pedantry of our academicians.¹⁴

In the nineteenth century, generally, there was a willingness to add to a painting if it was felt to improve its appearance. In 1837 Giovanni Bedotti wrote in one of the nineteenth-century restoration books, *De la Restauration des Tableaux*, that to find a buyer the restorer might have to correct the "errors" of the painter, although he should be careful to leave the characteristics of the painter's style and period if possible.¹⁵ Since early Italian paintings were often considered "feeble" and problematic,¹⁶ it is understandable that they especially were seen to need correction.

Eastlake was willing to make corrections where the draughtsmanship in the figures seemed problematic. In 1862, he was considering a Giuliano Bugiardini *Madonna and Child with the Infant Saint John* for purchase (see fig. 1) and noted:

The head of the infant C[hrist] is so placed under a palm tree that the tree seems part of



FIG. 6. *Saint Jerome*, Cosimo Tura, ca. 1470, oil and tempera on wood panel (identified), 39 3/4 x 22 1/2 in. (101 x 57.2 cm). National Gallery, London. Detail during cleaning.

it—This might be rectified by making the gilding of the nimbus a little more conspicuous—the hair might also be brought down an inch & half on the forehead & the top of the head reduced—the nimbus would then also require to be brought lower. The same defect (too much forehead & skull) is observable in the little St. John & might be rectified—his body is also a little too thick.¹⁷

He did not purchase the painting, and these changes were never made. Two paintings Eastlake did purchase and that Molteni restored were Cosimo Tura's *Saint Jerome* and Cima da Conegliano's *David and Jonathan*. Tura was a problematic painter for Crowe and Cavalcaselle as well as for Morelli. Morelli described him as "morose," "grotesque," and a "hard, dry and angular painter, but often very impressive,"¹⁸ and Crowe and Cavalcaselle wrote on Tura's work that:

He had no idea of selection; leanness, dryness, paltriness, overweight of head and exaggerated size of feet and hands, were almost invariable accompaniments of his pictures. In most of them it would seem as if well-fed flesh had become withered by want of nutrition . . .¹⁹

Eastlake seemingly concurred as Saint Jerome's raised arm has been widened (fig. 6) and his



FIG. 7. *Madonna and Child; Saint John the Baptist; Saint Jerome*, Sano di Pietro, ca. 1450–55, tempera on wood panel, $17 \frac{3}{8} \times 12 \frac{5}{8}$ in. (44.1 × 32.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY. Portable triptych, with the 19th-century restorations.



FIG. 8. *Madonna and Child; Saint John the Baptist; Saint Jerome* (fig. 7), during treatment, with the 19th-century restorations removed.

exposed bony knee resting on the ground made less angular.²⁰ Similarly, in the Cima, Jonathan's thin leg has been made more massive and muscular.²¹ Not to suggest a continual correspondence in taste between Eastlake and Crowe and Cavalcaselle, it is interesting to note that the latter writers, while favorably disposed to Cima, remarked that he did not have Giovanni Bellini's "largeness or breadth of the shape in figures."²²

If Eastlake and other nineteenth-century collectors were disturbed by weak draughtsmanship, they also appeared to have been bothered by the notion that fifteenth-century works were, to quote William Ottley in 1826, "commonly deficient in the breadth of chiaroscuro . . ."²³ The Sano di Pietro triptych from the Costabili Collection owned by the Metropolitan Museum was probably restored by Molteni's pupil Luigi Cavenaghi (1844–1918) sometime before it was put up for sale in 1885.²⁴ The restorer had recreated lost modeling on the face of the Madonna and to the necks of both the Madonna and Christ Child making the figures more three-dimensional. He also reinforced outlines, shortened such anatomical oddities as John the Baptist's long toes, and for reasons that are difficult to understand, changed Saint John's hand holding the banderole (figs. 7 and 8). The figures in a Giovanni Bellini *Madonna and Child* were also given additional modeling around the same time, especially in the

Christ Child's robes and around both figures' eyes and along the edges of the noses.²⁵ The effect seems to be a sweetening of the expressions and a more regularized physiognomy.

Finally, an examination of Bramantino's *Adoration of the Magi* (an 1862 Layard purchase from the Manfrin Collection in Venice that he sent to Molteni for restoration) is also revealing. Among other changes, Molteni extended and regularized the shadow falling on the building behind the Virgin and repainted the left side of the broken doorway to disguise a difference of color on the lintel.²⁶ Both changes tended to make the play of light and shade across the building more rational.

A final type of treatment Molteni used for Eastlake and his circle was the application of a pigmented varnish. This tended to mute the colors by reproducing the look of an aged varnish, believed by many theoreticians to impart harmony to paintings. Köster, in *Über Restaurierung Alter Ölgemälde*, wrote that disharmonies could be compensated for by leaving dirt and old varnish on pictures and that thanks to this patina, "a picture could become even more harmonious than when made by its creator."²⁷ In 1837 Bedotti concurred, explaining that "to clean a picture well, one must know how to paint since a true artist in cleaning a picture is often forced to use the grime which covers it to give harmony and effect to the painting . . ."²⁸ In 1846 in a letter to *The*

Times concerning the National Gallery, London's cleaning of paintings, John Ruskin lamented the cleaning of Rubens's *War and Peace* since with the old varnish, the painting had:

mellowed by time into more perfect harmony than when it left the easel, enriched and warmed without losing any of its freshness or energy. The execution of the master is always so bold and frank as to be completely, perhaps, even most agreeably seen under circumstances of obscurity . . .²⁹

Conveniently, a pigmented varnish also helped hide abrasions and damages to a painting.³⁰

Harmony was an important nineteenth-century critical concept, and Crowe and Cavalcaselle often praised a work by noting its "soft harmony in colours" and dismissed works with "violent contrasts."³¹ It was also a quality Eastlake thought early Italian paintings often lacked, writing in 1853:

a large portion of those early pictures are full of affectation and grimace; and many persons who have, or fancy they have, a taste for those pictures are insensible to essential elements of painting, such as beauty of arrangement, harmony of coloring, and natural action and expression.³²

If there was not enough harmony, Eastlake seemed to have been quite willing to add patina. In 1861 he wrote to the restorer Raffaele Pinti concerning a Cima *Virgin and Child*:

The Cima da Conegliano would be improved, not by removing anything but by first lowering the tone of the Child's head more nearly to the neutral tone of the rest of his figure; and afterwards by slightly warming the whole picture. The obvious defect now is the difference in tone between the Child's head and body.³³

There is no indication that this was ever done. In Tura's *Muse* however, that Layard bought in 1866 from the Costabili Collection, it appears that Molteni used a pigmented varnish to tone down the pink robe's green lining, diminishing the contrast between the complementary colors (figs. 9 and 10).³⁴ The attraction to patina found an extreme manifestation in Gaetano Biachi's



FIG. 9. *Muse*, Cosimo Tura, ca. 1455–60, oil with egg tempera on poplar panel (identified), 45³/₄ × 28 in. (116.2 × 71.1 cm). National Gallery, London. Before varnish removal.



FIG. 10. *Muse* (fig. 9), after varnish removal.

attempt, while restoring the Bardi Chapel, to create the look of an aged varnish on Giotto's frescoes.³⁵

In contrast to Eastlake's restoration practices was Cavalcaselle's more archaeological approach. Cavalcaselle opposed the integration of losses in the artist's style or any sort of reconstruction or additions; in 1877 he wrote regulations for restoration work undertaken by the State:

It does not matter if you recognize a restoration, in fact, you should be able to recognize it, since what is necessary is respect for the original work at least for works belonging to the State. A lie, even a beautiful lie, must be avoided. Scholars should be able to recognize in a restored picture what is original and what is new ...³⁶

Cavalcaselle was not the first person to articulate this view, and his position was the less popular side of an ongoing debate. The head of the Accademia in Venice, Pietro Selvatico, with whom Cavalcaselle had studied in Padua between 1840 and 1844,³⁷ recommended in 1842 restricting the treatment of paintings to structural stabilization. The Florentine restorer Ulisse Forni in his 1866 book *Manuale del Pittore Restauratore* criticized this recommendation. Forni countered that Selvatico had advocated leaving paintings in ruins and therefore making them impossible to appreciate.³⁸

The restoration work supervised by Cavalcaselle at the Arena Chapel (1868–71) and Assisi (1872–73), not surprisingly, focused on stabilization not reconstruction. In 1871 Cavalcaselle wrote that at Assisi, “the work to be done comes down to securing the intonaco which is threatening to fall and stabilizing the paint which is separating from the intonaco.”³⁹ To prevent continuing water damage to the frescoes, Cavalcaselle also urged that the roof be repaired, the outside walls replastered, and the windows sealed. There was no provision for reconstruction of lacunae, and losses were toned back with a neutral watercolor.⁴⁰ There were precedents for this type of treatment, and as early as 1836 various government commissions were working to prevent further deterioration of the frescoes while prohibiting

any retouching or reconstruction.⁴¹ Not only in Assisi, but in other sites in Italy this was the case, and in 1831 the local arts commission in Lucca instructed the restorer Michele Ridolfo to leave the large lacunae in frescoes by Amico Aspertini if these areas could not be reconstructed accurately.⁴²

Both Cavalcaselle and Morelli were involved in the 1867–77 restoration campaign of Mantegna's Camera degli Sposi, and their points of view are interesting to compare. Cavalcaselle originally vetoed a campaign in Mantua since both the *intonaco* and paint layer were sound. Morelli, however, felt strongly that the paintings would be improved if the overpaint from a past restoration effort was removed and if the faded colors of the festoons and the illusionistic wall hangings were “refreshed.” Morelli and Cavenaghi were appointed by the Minister of Education to undertake the restorations. When the government fell shortly after the appointment, Morelli lost his position,



FIG. 11. *Jacob Deceiving Isaac*, Giotto, ca. 1290, Upper Church, St. Francis, Assisi. After the Cavalcaselle restoration campaign.

and Cavalcaselle agreed to take over.⁴³ This did not improve Morelli and Cavalcaselle's often inimical relationship, and Morelli wrote highly critical remarks concerning Cavalcaselle's restoration, accusing him of having destroyed the paintings.⁴⁴ Some of Morelli's animosity was probably related to sloppy workmanship and poor materials used by Cavalcaselle's restorers,⁴⁵ but his criticism also appears to have been based on a different conception of how restored paintings should look. In 1912 Cavenaghi wrote of Cavalcaselle's restoration at Mantua that the system of "using tints similar to the dominant color . . . forgot that restoration is an art and not a mechanical operation,"⁴⁶ probably expressing the by-then-deceased Morelli's opinion as well.

Although Cavalcaselle's restoration choices were archaeological, they also seem to have been related to a Romantic appreciation for pure, primitive simplicity and even a taste for the picturesque ruin. Cavalcaselle's vision of the Assisi restoration

project was, "to conserve what has remained of the old, restoring . . . to its primitive character even that part disfigured by additions and later changes."⁴⁷ In practice this involved a proposal to remove any Renaissance or Baroque additions to the church, a re-gothicization common in projects all over Europe at the time. When the appearance of frescoes from the Upper Church after Guglielmo Botti's restoration in 1872 is compared to a mid-twentieth-century and a 1978–79 campaign, Botti's restoration (supervised by Cavalcaselle) seems to underscore the damaged and worn look of the images (figs. 11, 12, and 13). While all three campaigns are similar in avoiding reconstruction, Botti's restoration eschewed any attempt to use his watercolor tone to integrate the image.

In conclusion, Cavalcaselle and Eastlake were scholars who cared passionately about early Renaissance painting and felt that they were presenting these works in the best possible light. Because



FIG. 12. *Jacob Deceiving Isaac* (fig. 11), after a mid 20th-century restoration campaign.



FIG. 13. *Jacob Deceiving Isaac* (fig. 11), after the restoration campaign of 1978–79.

of their different views concerning the nature of the paintings, however, they restored them in radically different ways. Furthermore, their concerns about levels of cleaning and loss compensation still have not been definitively resolved, since there are usually no easy answers, and decisions often can only be made on the basis of taste and aesthetic judgment. Generation upon generation has reinterpreted works of art both in writing and through restoration, and it is difficult to maintain that a particular approach will ever be definitive.

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NOTES

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2. *Ibid.*, pp. 109–10.
3. Philip Hendy, *An Exhibition of Cleaned Pictures (1936–1947)*. London: National Gallery, Printed for the Trustees, 1947, p. xviii.
4. Jaynie Anderson, "The first cleaning controversy at the National Gallery 1846–1853" in Victoria Todd (ed.), *Appearance, Opinion, Change: Evaluating the Look of Paintings*. London: UKIC, 1990, p. 3.
5. Francis Haskell, *Rediscoveries in Art: Some Aspects of Taste, Fashion, and Collecting in England and France*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976, p. 45.
6. Jaynie Anderson (ed.), "Dietro lo pseudonimo" in Giovanni Morelli, *Della Pittura Italiana: Studii Storico-Critici. Le Gallerie Borghese e Doria-Pamphili a Roma*. Milan: Adelphi, 1991, pp. 529–30.
7. Jaynie Anderson, "The rediscovery of Ferrarese Renaissance painting in the Risorgimento," *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 135, No. 1085 (August, 1993), p. 545.
8. Alessandro Conti, "Vicende e cultura del restauro" in Federico Zeri (ed.), *Storia dell'Arte Italiana 10. Part 3: Situazioni, Momenti, e Indagini*, Vol. 3: *Conservazione, Falso, Restauro*. Turin: G. Einaudi, 1981, pp. 68–9.
9. Allan Braham, "The 'improvement' of Pre-Raphaelites: case histories of some fifteenth-century Italian panels," *Apollo*, Vol. 101 (May 1975), p. 360.
10. Jaynie Anderson, "Layard and Morelli" in F.M. Fales and B.J. Hickey (eds.), *Austen Henry Layard tra l'Oriente e Venezia*. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1987, p. 114.
11. "Voi solo il unico al mondo potete renderli la vita estinta da scelleratissimo restauro intanto che mascherà l'autore . . ." *The Travel Diaries of Otto Mündler 1855–1858* (ed. C.T. Dowd, introduction by Jaynie Anderson), *The Walpole Society*, Vol. 51 (1985), p. 62.
12. Leonetto Tintori and Eve Borsook, *Giotto: The Peruzzi Chapel*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1961, pp. 32–4.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 15 and 29.
14. Anderson 1993 (cited in note 7), p. 546.
15. Conti 1981 (cited in note 8), p. 77.
16. Séroux d'Agincourt remarked, "However useful some knowledge of the works of the earliest stages of the Renaissance may be for the History of Art, it would be dangerous to pursue our studies of them too far: above all, we must avoid the kind of enthusiasm felt by certain modern artists for these experiments, which are still too feeble from every point of view to serve as models." Haskell 1976 (cited in note 5), p. 46.
17. *The Travel Diaries of Otto Mündler* (see note 11), p. 23.
18. Giovanni Morelli, *Italian Painters: Critical Studies of their Works, the Munich and Dresden Galleries*. London: John Murray, 1907, p. 128.
19. J.A. Crowe and G.B. Cavalcaselle, *A History of Painting in North Italy from the Fourteenth to the Sixteenth Century*, Vol. 2. London: John Murray, 1912, p. 228.
20. Jill Dunkerton, "Cosimo Tura as painter and draughtsman: the cleaning and examination of his *Saint Jerome*," *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, Vol. 15 (1994), p. 43.
21. Braham 1993 (cited in note 9), pp. 366–7.
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23. William Ottley, *A Series of Plates Engraved after the Paintings and Sculptures of the Most Eminent Masters of the Early Florentine School*. London, 1826, Introduction.
24. Anderson 1993 (cited in note 7), p. 546.
25. Conti 1981 (cited in note 8), plates 84–5.
26. Jill Dunkerton, "The technique and restoration of Bramantino's *Adoration of the Kings*," *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, Vol. 14 (1993), p. 44.
27. Conti 1981 (cited in note 8), p. 77.
28. "Pour bien nettoyer un tableau, il faut savoir peindre, car le véritable artiste, tout en nettoyant un tableau, est souvent forcé de se servir de la crasse qui le couvre pour donner de l'harmonie et de l'effet à la peinture . . ." Bianchi 1984 (cited in note 1), p. 111.
29. Anderson 1990 (cited in note 4), p. 4.
30. Alessandro Conti, "Giovanni Morelli ed il restauro amatoriale" in Giacomo Agosti, Maria Elisabetta Manca, and Matteo Panzeri (eds.), *Giovanni Morelli e la Cultura dei Conoscitori: Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Bergamo, 4–7 Giugno, 1987*. Bergamo: P. Lubrina, 1993, p. 167.

31. Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1912 (cited in note 22), pp. 24 and 244 or Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1912 (cited in note 19), p. 229, for example.
32. Haskell 1976 (cited in note 5), p. 54. Eastlake was not alone in this opinion. The Accademia di Belli Arti in Pisa wrote in 1859 concerning the use of a wax consolidant on frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli at the Campo Santo; they acknowledged that the wax had altered the colors throwing the “general harmony” out of balance, but felt this was acceptable since, “*ora chi non sa che il pregio principale della pittura di quel secolo consiste più nella purezza del disegno, nella verità dell’espressione, che nel maestero del chiaro-scuro o nel artificio del colorito . . .*” Conti 1981 (cited in note 8), pp. 79–80.
33. Jaynie Anderson, “A ‘most improper picture’: transformations of Bronzino’s erotic allegory,” *Apollo*, Vol. 139, No. 384 (February 1991), p. 22.
34. Tura’s *Muse* was examined at the National Gallery, London before a conservation campaign in the 1980s. It was discovered that the varnish had been deliberately tinted with blackish and red-brown pigment particles, possibly by Molteni. Layard had sent the *Muse* to Molteni in 1866. Although no treatment records are extant, Molteni’s correspondence and other letters referring to his work mention artificial patination of paintings using a varnish pigmented with Cassel earth. Jill Dunkerton, Ashok Roy, and Alistair Smith, “The unmasking of Tura’s *Allegorical Figure*: a painting and its concealed image,” *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, Vol. 11 (1987), pp. 9–13.
35. Conti 1981 (cited in note 8), p. 78.
36. “*Poco importa che si conosca il restauro, che anzi lo si dovrebbe conoscere, ma quello che è necessario si è che sia rispettato l’originale della pittura almeno nelle opere appartenenti allo Stato. La bugia, anche detto con bel garbo deve essere tolta di mezzo. Lo studioso potrà conoscere da un dipinto restaurato a questa maniera quello che è originale da quello che è nuovo . . .*” Donata Levi, *Cavalcaselle, Il Pionere della Conservazione dell’Arte Italiana*. Turin: G. Einaudi, 1988, pp. 350–51.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
38. Ulisse Forni, *Manuale del Pittore Restauratore*. Florence, 1866, pp. 12–13.
39. “*Il lavoro da farsi si riduce a fermar gli intonachi che minacciano a cadere, ed assicurare il colore che si isola dall’intonaco stesso.*” Levi 1988 (cited in note 36), p. 337.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 337–9, 347.
41. Irene Hueck, “La Basilica Franciscana di Assisi nell’ottocento: alcuni documenti su restauri progettati ed interventi eseguiti,” *Bolletino d’Arte* Ser. VI, 66 (1981), p. 144.
42. Conti 1981 (cited in note 8), p. 80.
43. Michele Cordaro, “Vicende conservative dei dipinti murali” in Michele Cordaro (ed.), *Mantegna: La Camera degli Sposi*. Milan: Electa, 1992, pp. 334–6.
44. Giovanni Morelli, *Italian Painters: Critical Studies of their Works. The Borghese and Doria Pamfili Galleries in Rome*. London: 1900, p. 82.
45. Codaro 1992 (cited in note 43), p. 237.
46. “*passare tinte approssimative al colore dominante . . . dimenticava che il restaurare è un’arte e non un’operazione meccanica.*” Conti 1981 (cited in note 8), p. 169.
47. “*Conservare quanto è rimasto d’antico restituendo . . . al suo carattere primitivo anche quella parte deturpata dalle aggiunte o mutamenti posteriori.*” Levi 1988 (cited in note 36), pp. 340–41.

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FIG. 1. *Madonna and Child with Saint Mary Magdalene and Saint Catherine*, Pietro Lorenzetti, ca. 1330/40, tempera on wood panel transferred to canvas, center panel $43\frac{1}{2} \times 23\frac{1}{4}$ in. (110.5 \times 59.1 cm); side panels each $40 \times 19\frac{1}{2}$ in. (101.6 \times 49.5 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Stephen Pichetto, Conservator of the Kress Collection, 1927–1949

Ann Hoenigswald

IN 1949 RUSH KRESS PROPOSED the formation of a “central organization of all American museums where owners and responsible keepers of paintings could apply for advice in order to keep cultural treasures . . . from falling into bad hands.” He went on to suggest that “if and when a central institute for the technical care of works of art and especially of paintings . . . will come into being this institution should bear the name of Mr. Stephen Pichetto.”¹

Rush Kress, following the lead of his brother Samuel H. Kress, focused not only on the acquisition of art but also recognized that as collectors they had a responsibility which extended to the care of the paintings and sculpture as well. Although other collectors hired restorers to look after their works of art, it was quite unusual that a twenty-year relationship was formed which extended well beyond the normally defined responsibilities of a restorer. Stephen Pichetto served Samuel and Rush Kress in a unique capacity.

Stephen Pichetto, the second child of recently arrived Italian immigrant parents, was born in New York City in 1887. His father, Luigi, had arrived in the United States from Genoa in 1882, two years after Fortunata who would become Stephen’s mother.² Although it has been suggested that Pichetto came from a long line of old-world restorers, his father supported the family as a chef.³ Almost nothing is known about Pichetto’s youth in New York City or his training as a restorer. He was purported to have graduated from the selec-

tive Townsend Harris High School and City College as well as to have enrolled at the Art Students League, but there are no records of his attendance.⁴ His training as a restorer is equally undocumented. Pichetto may have been introduced to restoration by an uncle who lived briefly with the family. It has been suggested that this uncle took young Stephen with him to Italy where he introduced him to Italian art and possibly made connections with Italian restorers. His family has remarked that he traveled in Europe and studied the techniques of the Old Masters at the National Gallery, London, but there is no confirmation of this.⁵

Until 1908, when he is listed in the New York City Business Directory as a restorer with an establishment on East 28th Street, there is nothing official that links Stephen Pichetto to the field of restoration.⁶ However, owning a business at the young age of twenty-one implies that he must have had financial backing or his own resources. Who his clients were at this early date is unknown. Except for listings in the directories—at various times as a restorer, an artist, and an art dealer—there is little information about him, his clients or his connections. However by the late 1920s his combination of a restorer's skills, business acumen, and probably most important the requisite personality, allowed him to become very successful and to secure a prominent position in the art world. This decade saw Pichetto working as a restorer for the dealer, Joseph Duveen, being named consultant restorer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and entering the circle of Count Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi, a Florentine dealer and collector. He also began an association with many of the major American collectors of his day, including Mellon, Lehman, Heinemann, Dale, Walters, Warburg, Lewisohn, and Guggenheim among others. Most importantly at this point, however, he met Samuel H. Kress. Perhaps the introduction to Kress came through Duveen, who presumably knew Kress, and it may also be speculated that Kress met Contini-Bonacossi through Pichetto.⁷ Contini-Bonacossi respected Pichetto—possibly because they benefited financially from

one another—and mentioned to Rush Kress that Pichetto was “one of the very few who can vouchsafe an opinion with absolute competence.” Contini-Bonacossi went on to say, however, that “I have never allowed him or others to guess that I have this intimate opinion of him, and I think it good tactics to keep it so.”⁸ Until Pichetto edged out “‘The Count,’ as he was called, as Sam Kress’s principal advisor,”⁹ Pichetto and Contini-Bonacossi worked closely together, but their correspondence clearly reveals that they shared with one another only what they assumed the other wanted to hear. Theirs was a business partnership and unlike the relationship of genuine friendship based on respect and mutual commitment that Pichetto had with Kress.

On February 27, 1929 Pichetto testified on behalf of Joseph Duveen in the trial of Hahn v. Duveen, a lengthy case that hinged on the authenticity of a disputed painting attributed to Leonardo da Vinci. Described as “a lowbrow and highbrow circus,”¹⁰ the trial involved every leading name in the art world. Merely being associated with the “season’s greatest extravaganza”¹¹ meant that one had secured a visible position and would enjoy the free publicity that resulted from the media attention. It was perhaps his association with Duveen that gave Pichetto his taste for the good life and the confidence to believe that he could achieve it. Duveen used the services of many restorers, but Pichetto was among his favorites, and they both benefited significantly from the relationship working in an era and in a trade, “as Duveen practised it, that even a restorer who worked for Duveen could leave a fortune.”¹²

Although it was and is not unheard of for a restorer to associate himself with dealers, it required a certain personality to establish and then maintain equal footing. Pichetto’s demeanor and appearance—always wearing a three-piece suit and sporting a hat—and his practices of arriving at work in a chauffeur-driven car, staying at the best hotels, and riding in the drawing-room compartment while his men were given berths on the train implied the position he had reached and, what is more important, the image he wished to

project. John Walker's description was probably not far off when he described Pichetto as:

... a large well-fed bullfrog, perfectly tranquil but ready to snap at any insect which might fly by. He had a cigar, lighted or unlighted always in his enormous mouth. He would get up, invariably with an amiable smile and take me through room after room where assistants are cleaning, inpainting, relining or cradling to point out some new Kress acquisition.¹³

Described as a man who was "overbearing and threw his weight around,"¹⁴ Pichetto claimed he had "restored tens of thousands of paintings during the past 25 years at the Metropolitan Museum of Art."¹⁵ He evidently maintained a very high opinion of himself when he boasted that he had:

succeeded in making many discoveries including absolutely permanent pigment colors; materials for protecting the same; varnish which will not change color and materials and methods for cleaning, all of which I am the only one who possesses this knowledge.¹⁶

Among all his other responsibilities, clients, and connections, Pichetto's association with Samuel H. Kress and his brother Rush Kress was probably the most fulfilling and rewarding, financially, professionally, and personally. Samuel H. Kress allowed Pichetto access to some of the greatest Italian paintings in America, and Pichetto reciprocated by providing Kress with service on many levels. Samuel H. Kress claimed that, "when selecting, I made certain never to acquire a painting that was so affected that it interfered with the original conception of the artist,"¹⁷ and in offering his generous gift of paintings to the National Gallery of Art stated that his intent was not only to deliver these treasures to the Gallery but to "place them in the best possible condition."¹⁸ This, of course, was Pichetto's contribution. According to John Walker, chief curator and later director of the National Gallery of Art, it was Pichetto's efficiency and businesslike methods that appealed to Samuel H. Kress. However,

Pichetto's role extended far beyond that of a restorer; Kress discovered in him a confidant and a connoisseur. There is little doubt that his primary responsibility was to provide counsel on the purchase of paintings based on their condition and undertake any necessary restoration, but it becomes clear from reading their correspondence that Pichetto was the person through whom all decision making was directed including art historical advice, information on provenance, iconography, attribution, and even the final approval for the titles of paintings. In the elaborate rating system of the Kress Collection, leading art historians ranked the paintings, but Pichetto cast the deciding vote. When John Walker, chief curator at the National Gallery of Art or David Finley, its director, wrote to Kress the mail always went through Pichetto who became the conduit for all art-related correspondence. Pichetto was responsible for the more mundane details as well—insurance valuations, temperature and humidity standards, and packing specifications. He had the final say on display and installation, which he planned by arranging small maquettes of the art to work out the hanging; he dictated the galleries' wall color, lighting, and decided on the use of marble trim, frames, and the infamous Kress shadow boxes. It was Pichetto who designed many of the frames and painstakingly selected the quality of velvet, identifying which frames would be bordered in green and which in red velvet. Until Samuel Kress suffered a stroke in 1946 and was disabled for nine years before his death, it seems that Pichetto was a key player in the purchase and care of the vast paintings collection.

Pichetto was the final arbiter on Kress publications as well. On offering its paintings to the National Gallery of Art, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation added "terms and agreements" that had to be ratified "before the gift would be consummated." The most important point was that "the Foundation [had] the right to require the employment by the Trustees of the National Gallery of Art of Stephen S. Pichetto for . . . any restoration work."¹⁹ When the 1946 catalogue was being written, the ultimate decisions includ-

ing the quality of the leather binding and the distribution list were Pichetto's responsibility. In honor of the dedication of six new Kress galleries at the National Gallery of Art, Pichetto delivered, presumably at Kress's request, the opening remarks. Similarly Pichetto contributed an article celebrating the Collection in the September 1939 issue of *American Collector*. Pichetto even conferred with doctors during Kress's illness. On occasion the two men vacationed together as well. Kress reaffirmed his respect for Pichetto by appointing him a trustee of the Kress Foundation in 1936 and curator of the Samuel H. Kress Collection at the National Gallery of Art in 1947. John Walker claimed that Pichetto had a greater influence on Kress than anyone else.

During his association with Kress, Pichetto officially began his appointment at the Metropol-

itan Museum of Art (fig. 2).²⁰ In 1928 he was named consultant restorer, a title he held until his death in 1949.²¹ Even after 1941, when Murray Pease was appointed Technical Advisor for Conservation of Works of Art, Pichetto maintained his position, albeit occupying a separate and distant space in the building. Pichetto demonstrated his respect for the Metropolitan Museum in 1948 when he contributed funds earmarked for the construction of a restoration studio at the Museum in honor of the institution's seventy-fifth anniversary. The Museum reciprocated by electing him a Fellow in Perpetuity.

In 1939 Pichetto assumed the position of consultant restorer at the National Gallery of Art. Although the appointment seemed similar to the role he held at the Metropolitan, the conditions for his appointment were unique. One of the



FIG. 2. Stephen Pichetto in the restorer's studio at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, December 5, 1936.

most important directives of the proposed gift of the Kress Collection was that “the paintings and sculpture should be kept in the best condition.”²² The Board of Trustees at the National Gallery of Art was informed that:

unless Kress could be assured that arrangements could be made, he would be unwilling to proceed . . . Mr. Kress expressed the desire that, if possible, Mr. Stephen Pichetto, a well known and thoroughly qualified restorer . . . be retained for this purpose.²³

John Walker remarked that he had no choice. He initially disliked and mistrusted Pichetto but later in life concluded that he and Pichetto were, in fact, working towards similar goals and that Pichetto had helped the National Gallery of Art “far more than I realized.”²⁴ In addition to his work as a

restorer, Pichetto played a substantial role in creating a new museum for the nation. Pichetto became one of the important forces behind the institution that would not open to the public for another two years. Pichetto was responsible for preparing the paintings for exhibition; he also arranged and planned the construction of an elaborate restoration studio in Washington. He required a large space with rooms dedicated to specific tasks, insisted that the area be air-conditioned and that the wall color be warm gray. Precise and lengthy lists of equipment were proposed, including twelve presses for the purpose of lining and cradling. As nothing else could, these numbers reflected the level of activity! His responsibilities at the National Gallery of Art extended to managing the wartime evacuation of paintings to Biltmore House in North Carolina in January 1942 (fig. 3),



FIG. 3. Stephen Pichetto, at left, moving paintings from the National Gallery of Art to Biltmore House for safekeeping, January 1942.

establishing the packing and transit guidelines and preparing the storage facilities with appropriate temperature and humidity standards.²⁵

It must be kept in mind that the National Gallery of Art and the Metropolitan Museum were secondary centers of activity to Pichetto's private studio, which occupied an entire floor of the Squibb Building in New York. Very prudently he never joined the permanent staff of the Metropolitan or the National Gallery of Art but maintained the title of consultant restorer. Presumably this allowed him to avoid conflict of interest, for he was simultaneously juggling work for major collectors and other museums in New York and elsewhere, bearing responsibility for modern paintings as well as Old Masters and even consulting with artists. Of course, these arrangements also allowed him to draw several salaries at the same time.

It appears, however, that Pichetto's most devoted attention was reserved for Samuel and, to a lesser extent, Rush Kress. They depended on one another's expertise and respected each other's eye and individual skills. Moreover they did not seem to be in competition nor harbor any jealousy towards one another; this was unlike the relationship Pichetto had with art historians and his fellow restorers. The art historians appeared to resent Pichetto because he had intimate access to collectors and their paintings yet did not share the academic credentials or social pedigree of the art historians, then considered almost a prerequisite in the field. Restorers were competing with one another for the same jobs and clients and certainly resented Pichetto's success. Pichetto was remembered as a man of strong will and ego, and although respected, he was not well liked by his colleagues. His clients, however, felt differently. Pichetto's business acumen and perhaps his ego as well allowed him to become a very wealthy man and even to refer to himself with some satisfaction as "the greatest restorer."²⁶

Kress and Pichetto respected one another's attention to detail, and each may have admired the other's keen business sense. Samuel H. Kress often included what he had learned from Pichetto

in his long letters to the staff at the National Gallery of Art. Kress insisted that paintings on wood required the greatest care and needed special treatment. He stressed that temperature and humidity changes could be very detrimental to a painting. Kress also emphasized that the gift to the nation included "X-ray shadowgraphs" (as he and Pichetto called them) "for their educational value" and reports showing the physical condition of paintings. He mentioned the importance of appropriate frames and even insisted that paintings on wood panels should be packed in boxes marked with arrows indicating the direction of the grain and shipped in like direction. Surely these instructions came from Pichetto.

Stephen Pichetto, however, did not work alone. The business and the large staff that Pichetto employed were run efficiently under the watchful eye of Marguerite Lewis, his office manager and administrator. Three men—Steven Story, Dan Coppari, and Paul Kiehart—did retouching in one room along with Rose Mary Sullivan who consolidated flaking paint for eight hours a day! In an adjacent room were his woodworkers, Joe McCarthy and Angelo Fatta. They worked on frames, inlays etc., and attached cradles to many of the wooden panels that were treated in his studio. Henry Hecht and Girard Roggeman carried out linings. Frank Sullivan, who worked at the National Gallery of Art after Pichetto's death, was remembered by Paul Kiehart as having no specific responsibilities. Most of the staff came to Pichetto with crafts skills or from art schools. After the war several of them went on to study at the Art Students League on the GI bill. Recognizing that "unscientific cleaning is the most serious thing that can happen to a painting because it cannot be corrected,"²⁷ according to Paul Kiehart again, Pichetto himself took all responsibility for the cleaning of pictures. (For a different view, see Mario Modestini's paper in this volume.) He worked in what was described as an elegant office/studio that was presumably furnished to appeal to his clients. He was surrounded by upholstered chairs and several easels with paintings artistically displayed.²⁸ Declaring

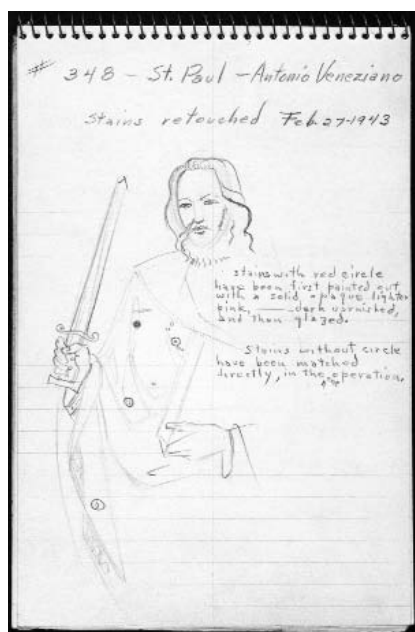


FIG. 4. Notes and a sketch of *Saint Paul* by Antonio Veneziano (now identified as Lorenzo di Niccolò) from the daybook of Paul Kiehart, February 27, 1943. Specific inpainting procedures are detailed.



FIG. 5. *Saint Paul*, Lorenzo di Niccolò, ca. 1385, tempera on wood panel, 42¹/₂ × 17³/₈ in. (107.3 × 44.2 cm). Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

that he “did not want to camouflage the damaged portions rather to retouch the missing portions with local color,”²⁹ Pichetto relied heavily on his three inpainters whose method was to apply colors in Winsor and Newton watercolors or in egg tempera, coat with French varnish (shellac) and glaze with dry colors in dammar varnish. Inpainting palettes included only seven colors, and varnishing was done with dammar; yet the supply books also list the purchase of light and dark varnish, oil varnish, restoring varnish, soft varnish, Murphy varnish, and “xx” varnish.³⁰ Although there is no doubt that much of Pichetto’s inpainting was overdone, his treatments were often well intended, and he claimed his goal was visual balance. Regarding the treatment of a Lorenzetti triptych (see fig. 1), Pichetto advised Contini-Bonacossi that he would not clean the gold background for although it would make it more brilliant, “it might lose its present subdued tone, which blends so well with the rest of the painting.”³¹

Pichetto’s studio has been criticized for being financially driven and factory-like, but although many believed that he never kept reports, there remain, in fact, very valuable records. Louis de Wild claimed that one never knew how much of the studio restoration was Pichetto’s own work, but in fact numerous daybooks identify precisely who did what (figs. 4 and 5).³² In addition, extensive photography documents the condition before, during, and after treatment, and photographs were often made in both light and dark conditions to record different information. Pichetto also requested raking light images, photographs of the reverse or the edge of a panel or the tacking margins. Ultraviolet and infrared images were also made as well as X-radiographs of nearly every painting in the Kress Collection.³³ Although Pichetto at one point had his own X-radiographic equipment, most of this work was done by Alan Burroughs³⁴ who had a very close relationship with Pichetto.³⁵ Apparently it was at Pichetto’s request that Kress financed the X-radiography project when Burroughs was no longer on the staff at the Fogg Art Museum. Despite existing

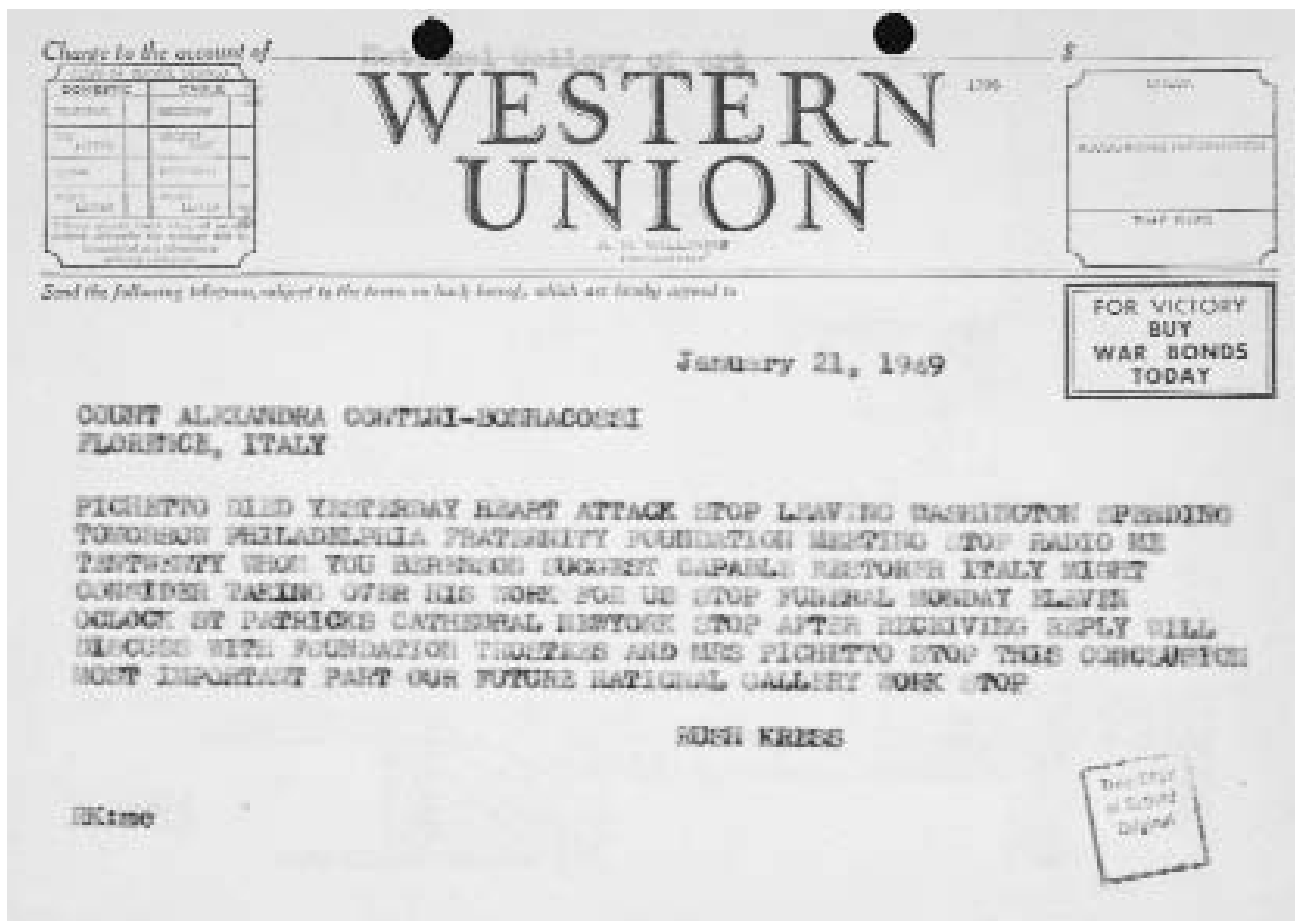


Fig. 6. Telegram from Rush Kress to Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi announcing Pichetto's death.

reports and photographs, the record keeping was uneven. Presumably this was done intentionally. There were certain things that Pichetto selected not to document; however John Walker's complaint was only partially justified when he claimed that there were no written records at all and that he wished that Pichetto would "keep the type of report made out by the Metropolitan Museum."³⁶ Walker's concern was that "the reports would protect the present staff against criticism by future curators and restorers."³⁷ Pichetto responded that he preferred to devote his time to actual work on the paintings rather than to elaborate records.

By 1949 Stephen Pichetto held concurrent positions as consultant restorer at the Metropolitan Museum and at the National Gallery of Art. He had an extremely successful private practice and was actively involved in many activities

of the Kress Foundation in addition to being the advisor and confidant to Samuel H. and Rush Kress. This heavy workload may have led to his death; on January 20, 1949 he died suddenly of a massive heart attack at the age of sixty-one while hosting some Italian dealers who had brought paintings for Kress's consideration.

His funeral, held at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York, reflected his importance. The flurry of telegrams crossing the ocean immediately after his death also conveyed the weight of the loss. Many people believed that an enormous void had been left in the art world. In a letter to Marguerite Lewis, Alan Burroughs remarked that Kress "must be under terrific pressure without Stephen by his side," and she replied that "He tells everyone he is lost."³⁸ Within hours of acknowledging Pichetto's death, John Walker sent urgent wires to Bernard

Berenson requesting proposals for a suitable replacement for the National Gallery of Art position. Berenson replied the following morning that they shouldn't make a decision too quickly or hire someone trained on Dutch or Flemish paintings (presumably implying Marchig or de Wild) because "such restorers are apt to skin an Italian picture before they know what they are doing and a picture once skinned can be faked up but will never be itself again."³⁹ Simultaneously Rush Kress was imploring Contini-Bonacossi to suggest a restorer (fig. 6). Within weeks Contini-Bonacossi responded to Kress with the name of Mario Modestini, who was described as having "the temperament of a master and without exaggeration the finest restorer in the world."⁴⁰ Modestini arrived in the United States to assume Stephen Pichetto's role at the Kress Foundation, but he did not replace Pichetto at either the Metropolitan Museum or the National Gallery of Art.

Stephen Pichetto's son-in-law, Paul Andrepont, assumed the task of continuing the private business, but abandoned the plan quickly. Subsequently Marguerite Lewis offered the client list and her assistance to Kiehart, Story, and McCarthy, but they too were unable to make the business flourish. The skilled and experienced hands, the able administration, the existing capital equipment, and the impressive client list alone couldn't keep the business afloat. Without Pichetto there was no operation.

Pichetto's role at the Metropolitan and the National Gallery of Art was probably more important than has been recognized, but his name is justifiably linked more intimately to Samuel H. and Rush Kress and the Kress Foundation. It may well have been that he preferred to commit himself to individuals rather than institutions. Perhaps it allowed him more autonomy; perhaps he disliked or felt uncomfortable with the blatant snobbishness of the museums. Certainly Pichetto allied himself to the museum world and benefited from the contacts and credibility it afforded him, but his most visible devotion was to Kress.

For their part, the Kress brothers and ultimately

the Foundation recognized their indebtedness to Pichetto as well. Pichetto held that preservation was more important than restoration,⁴¹ and he left Samuel H. Kress with this legacy. Rush Kress claimed that:

our objective is to supply for the first time in the history of art a complete record of our restoration work from the beginning to the end so as to have a carefully worked out chapter in our foundation books on the subject RESTORE OR DESTROY.⁴²

Largely because of the influence of Stephen Pichetto, the Kress Foundation has remained deeply committed to the treatment of works of art, conservation education and research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Attempting to understand Stephen Pichetto's connection to the Kress Collection has been like piecing together a puzzle. There was no single source of information, and much of what I discovered contradicted earlier findings. Many of the comments were based on conjecture or affected by personal bias. The research, therefore, was dependent on the generosity of numerous people opening archives, sharing letters, memories, and reminiscences so I could consult primary sources.

The Conservation Department at the National Gallery of Art was very supportive of this project, and I am particularly grateful to my "research accomplices," Elizabeth Walmsley and Renée Lorion. Anne Halpern and Maygene Daniels always kept the name Pichetto in mind when they found archival references and passed them on to me. I am indebted to Lisa Ackerman and Dr. Marilyn Perry at the Samuel H. Kress Foundation: they allowed access to their files and answered numerous questions. Moreover, the Kress Foundation provided financial support to Renée Lorion. Mario and Dianne Dwyer Modestini were especially helpful particularly where our material dovetailed. Dorothy Mahon at the Metropolitan Museum provided a crucial research link, and I am extremely indebted to her. Jeanie James,

George Bisacca, and Keith Christiansen provided assistance as well. Francesca Bewer at the Fogg Museum and the Straus Center for Conservation generously opened their archives and pointed out many important details. Teresa Hensick and Ron Spronk answered additional questions. E. Peters Bowron and Joyce Hill Stoner provided material and shared my enthusiasm for the project. Access to the Duveen Archives was facilitated by Mark Henderson at the Getty Research Institute and by Susan Roeper at the Library of the Clark Art Institute.

I owe most, however, to those who knew Pichetto, either directly or indirectly, and who graciously retold their stories to me. Caroline Wells, Kate Lefferts, Henrietta Suhr, and Daniel Butler were particularly helpful. My utmost appreciation, however, goes to Robert Feller, Paul Kiehart, and Maura Dillon Pichetto. They thought they were merely recalling old memories. In truth, they allowed me to understand an important part of conservation history.

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NOTES

1. William Suida. National Gallery of Art Memorandum, February 18, 1949.
2. 1900 Census data, United States Census Information. National Archives and Records Administration. The date varies according to the source. The 1900 census, the 1910 census, immigration papers, and legal documents support very different dates.
3. For examples of other stories which were perpetuated see: Ann Hoenigswald with Renée Lorion and Elizabeth Walmsley, "Stephen Pichetto and conservation in America" in Andrew Oddy (ed.), *Past Practice—Future Prospects*, British Museum Occasional Paper No. 145. London: British Museum, 2001.
4. These erroneous credentials were repeated in his obituaries, official museum biographies, and within his family. It is assumed that Pichetto himself encouraged these myths.
5. Other than a trip in 1914 with his mother, there is no record of his journeys. One would like to assume that he traveled on occasion with Kress.
6. In a sworn affidavit from July 1917, written to be excused from the draft, Pichetto stated he had been "engaged in the restoration and preservation of priceless works of art since 1901." Duveen Brothers records, 1876–1981, Getty Research Institute, Research Library/Special Collections and Visual Resources.
7. In "The Kress brothers and their bucolic pictures" (in Chiyo Ishikawa et al. (eds.), *A Gift to America: Masterpieces of European Painting from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*, New York, Harry N. Abrams, 1994), Edgar Peters Bowron suggests that Kress introduced Pichetto to Contini-Bonacossi. Additional examination of the chronology of correspondence suggests that it was the other way around. This would not be out of character as Pichetto was known to make important introductions such as introducing his client Chester Dale to David Finley, director of the National Gallery of Art. This resulted in the important gift of modern paintings to the Gallery.
8. Correspondence from Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi to Rush Kress, January 10, 1949. National Gallery of Art Archives.
9. John Walker, *Self-Portrait with Donors*. Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1974, p. 142.
10. S. N. Behrman, *Duveen: The Intimate Portrait of a Fabulous Art Dealer*. New York: Harmony Books, 1951, p. 71.
11. *The Arts*, Vol. xv, pp. 183–4
12. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
13. Walker 1974 (cited in note 9), p. 143.
14. Transcribed telephone conversation between Joyce Hill Stoner and Louis de Wild, October 9, 1977. Transcription housed at the FAIC Archives, Winterthur Museum and Library.
15. *New York Times*, February 27, 1929
16. Duveen Brothers records, 1876–1981, Getty Research Institute, Research Library/Special Collections and Visual Resources.
17. Proposed letter from Samuel H. Kress to be sent to David Finley, March 13, 1941. David Finley Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
18. Unsigned letter to Board of Trustees of the National Gallery of Art, June 1, 1939. National Gallery of Art, Conservation Department Archives.
19. Letter from Rush Kress to David Finley, March 13, 1941. David Finley Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
20. In testimony given in the Hahn v. Duveen case in 1929, Pichetto claimed that he had been at the Metropolitan Museum for twenty-five years, but there is no documentation of his relationship with the Museum when Pichetto was seventeen years old. *New York Times*, February 27, 1929.
21. John Walker claimed that Pichetto was "inexplicably terminated" at the Metropolitan prior to assuming his position at the National Gallery of Art. This, of course, was not true, but Pichetto may have led Walker to believe this was the case so as to suggest that he was devoting his full attention to the Gallery.
22. Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting, May 26, 1939. National Gallery of Art, Conservation Department Archives.
23. Walker 1974 (cited in note 9), p. 142.
24. Unsigned letter to the Board of Trustees of the National

- Gallery of Art, June 1, 1939. National Gallery of Art, Conservation Department Archives.
25. Apparently Pichetto had strong opinions on the appropriate temperature and humidity levels for paintings and was called upon frequently to make suggestions. In 1941, he established his guidelines for these as well as the display, handling, and packing in a letter to Collas Harris of the Committee on the Conservation of Cultural Resources. His suggestions were particularly practical and well thought out. National Gallery of Art, Conservation Department files.
 26. Transcribed telephone conversation between Joyce Hill Stoner and Louis de Wild, October 9, 1977. Transcript housed at the FAIC Archives, Winterthur Museum and Library.
 27. Text of New York University radio broadcast, October 22, 1944.
 28. P. Kiehart, 1994. Correspondence from Paul Kiehart to the author, December 1994.
 29. New York University radio broadcast, October 22, 1944.
 30. This may have been Maximilian Toch's "famous matte varnish" as Louis de Wild referred to it. De Wild described a meeting he had with Toch and Pichetto in New York and mentioned that Toch and Pichetto were great friends and probably shared ideas about painting materials. Transcribed telephone conversation between Joyce Hill Stoner and Louis de Wild, October 9, 1977. Transcript housed in the FAIC Archives, Winterthur Museum and Library.
 31. Correspondence from Stephen Pichetto to Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi, December 30, 1926. National Gallery of Art, Conservation Department Archives.
 32. Each man maintained extensive daybooks detailing his activities. Rather than providing lengthy reports on every painting, the treatment records were kept by each individual, documenting his or her work.
 33. Many of the photographs are stamped "Pichetto Archives" on the reverse. This is not an archive in the true sense of the word. It is assumed that this label was applied after his death and may appear only on photographs at the National Gallery of Art.
 34. For more information about Alan Burroughs see: Francesca G. Bewer, "Technical research and the care of works at the Fogg Art Museum (1900–1950)" in *Oddy* 2001 (cited in note 3).
 35. Burroughs was the only person who referred to Pichetto as "Stephen" in his correspondence. Pichetto in reply addressed him as "Alan" which was equally unusual.
 36. John Walker memorandum for the file, July 22, 1948.
 37. *Ibid.*
 38. Correspondence from Alan Burroughs to Marguerite Lewis, April 7, 1949. Her undated reply is on the same letter.
 39. Correspondence from Bernard Berenson to Rush Kress, January 22, 1949.
 40. Correspondence from Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi to Rush Kress, February 9, 1949.
 41. New York University radio broadcast, October 22, 1944.
 42. Rush Kress to David Finley, November 21, 1949, from the David Finley Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

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FIG. 1. Mario Modestini with his team in the Carnegie Hall studio with *Queen Zenobia Addressing her Soldiers* by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo. From left to right: Quarantelli, Robert Manning, Bartolo Bracaglia, Giuseppe Barberi, Mario Modestini, Amleto De Santis, and Angelo Fatta.

Mario Modestini, Conservator of the Kress Collection, 1949–1961

Dianne Dwyer Modestini with Mario Modestini

THE SUDDEN DEATH OF Stephen Pichetto on January 20, 1949 was a grave problem for the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. Had the collection ultimately formed by Samuel Henry Kress and, later, his Foundation been installed in a single museum in New York, as he once intended, it would have constituted, if not the greatest, then certainly the most comprehensive collection of Italian art in the United States, if not the world, studded with hundreds of masterpieces or “leaders” as the retail magnate was wont to call them. The story is well known but, as the lone survivor of those years, I shall briefly recap the events. Shortly before the 1941 opening of the National Gallery of Art its first director, David Finley, a lawyer and advisor to Andrew Mellon, visited Kress to ask if the new museum might borrow 400 paintings. Kress agreed, and an initial group, many taken from the walls of his apartment, was sent to Washington. Samuel himself fell seriously ill shortly after and died in 1955; it was left to his younger brother, Rush Kress, to decide how to best fulfill his brother’s wishes. The Foundation’s commitment to Washington was already strong and the Kress Collection at the National Gallery of Art replaced the idea of a Kress Museum. Samuel Kress had always lent works from his collection around the country, and some paintings had already been given to museums in Denver, Houston and other cities. This precedent developed into a program to donate an art collection consisting of twenty-five to forty paintings and often several sculptures to each of eighteen regional museums.

In 1949, this ambitious art project had just begun to be formulated by the Foundation as one of its two principal missions, the other being medical research, and it was still on the drafting board when Pichetto's untimely death left Rush Kress, the Foundation's president, and Guy Emerson, its art director and a trustee, in a state of shock. A large shipment from Count Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi, the Florentine collector and art dealer, languished in storage, and Pichetto's staff was paralyzed. Meanwhile his widow kept the studio open while bills for rent and salaries, which the Foundation felt a moral obligation to pay, mounted. This was not good business. Emerson assessed the situation and wisely urged Rush to proceed slowly as Pichetto had warned them about the danger of paintings being ruined by "careless and incompetent people . . . in the field . . . experts" rumored to have "ruined" many paintings at the Metropolitan and Boston museums.¹

Rush Kress turned to his principal art advisors, Contini-Bonacossi and Bernard Berenson.² Both suggested that he talk to me and as a result a telegram arrived inviting me to come to New York. At that moment I was in São Paulo, Brazil where I had set up a didactic exhibition for a proposed new museum. I had always wanted to visit New York, and Contini-Bonacossi urged me to go directly since the situation was critical.

I arrived at La Guardia Field on Saturday, March 7, 1949. Gualtiero Volterra, Contini-Bonacossi's buying agent and a trusted friend of Rush Kress, referred to affectionately by both men as "the maestro" because he had been a child prodigy pianist, was already in New York and came to meet me. We stayed at the Plaza Hotel where a lovely room with a large bath and a window overlooking Central Park cost \$8.50 a night. On Monday we went to the offices of the Kress Foundation, a small space in Pichetto's 745 Fifth Avenue studio, a suite of five or six rooms with small windows and low ceilings. There were paintings everywhere. Those that were finished looked as shiny as if they had just come off an automobile assembly line.

With Volterra as my interpreter, I met with Rush Kress and Guy Emerson and eventually the other trustees and officers of the Foundation.

Kress liked to work out the practical details right away, and so we agreed that I would submit an estimate for the work to be done on each painting and invoice each "job," as Pichetto had. In the meanwhile John Walker, chief curator and later director of the National Gallery of Art, suggested that as I planned to stay until early April I might work on some of the Kress paintings that were left in Pichetto's studio, as a sort of sample to show them what I could do.

I chose a panel that had been recently cradled, a *Madonna and Child* by Paolo di Giovanni Fei, a Sieneese artist of the fifteenth century, today in the National Gallery of Art in Washington. It was a tempera painting with a gold background, very dirty, covered with candle smoke, soot and old varnishes. I don't think it had ever been cleaned. The picture was sent to me at the Plaza Hotel where a large north-facing window provided perfect light. My first problem was to find something to use to soften the black deposits. Normally I used an unguent that I made up myself from various ingredients according to a recipe from the manual *Il Restauratore dei Dipinti* by Count Giovanni Secco-Suardo consisting of melted animal fat, linseed oil and Marseilles soap.³ Being without my usual materials, I had to improvise, and I bought a product called Pond's cold cream that women use to remove make-up. I mixed this with a bit of Marseilles soap and some raw linseed oil. I made various tests to see how long it was necessary to leave this creamy emulsion on the painting, removing it with turpentine. In a few days I had cleaned the painting and done some minor retouching with tempera colors. The painting was in a very good state. Walker pronounced himself satisfied and told Kress that I had done a beautiful job.

I stayed on in New York until the middle of April and worked on several other paintings. After Volterra's departure, the research curator of the Foundation, Dr. William Suida, the great Viennese art historian who had resided in the United States since the 1930s, befriended me and helped me in my conversations with Kress. We agreed that I would take on the responsibilities of the Kress Collection for part of the year and would

oversee the men who had worked for Pichetto. Kress was very kind and cordial, which was, in fact, his nature. He seemed very American to me and, in some ways, had a taste for simple things. After we had confirmed our arrangement, he invited me to lunch at Horn & Hardart's, where, he said, they made the best coffee in town. The walls were covered with little boxes with glass doors through which you could see the food offered. You inserted the right number of nickels, and the door would pop open, and you took whatever meal you had chosen. It was an interesting experience, and naturally I never went back there again.

Kress wanted me to move into Pichetto's studio, but I didn't like the space. Although it was on the fifteenth floor, the light was poor since the windows were small, which meant that the restorers always had to work with electric lamps. While Gualtiero Volterra was still in New York, after a lot of searching, we leased a suite of rooms at 221 West 57th Street next to the Art Students League, which would serve both as my studio and as offices for the Foundation. There was a big room with good north light from a large window. The collection at that time consisted of about 1,300 paintings, some on loan to the National Gallery of Art, some at the Kress apartment at 1020 Fifth Avenue, and many in storage at the Morgan Manhattan and Atlas warehouses.

I returned to Rome to tidy up my affairs before

returning to New York in July, as we had agreed. For the moment, not sure how long I would stay in New York, I did not close my gallery.

Shortly after my return to Rome, Kress's secretary Fred Geiger began to cable that the workroom would be ready on April 25th and when will Modestini arrive? After much frantic correspondence between an impatient Rush Kress and a concerned Contini-Bonacossi, I finally booked passage to New York on the Queen Elizabeth to assume my new responsibilities. Among my papers I recently came across a radiogram dated July 12, 1949: WELCOME TO AMERICA SUIDA AND EMERSON WILL MEET YOU AT DOCK R H KRESS. By August 19th a Rush Kress memo asks whether Modestini "needs any more paintings to work on during the next three weeks." Scrawled pencil note: "Now has 30."

The room at the Foundation quickly became too small for the avalanche of work arriving from the storage warehouses. It was evident that the art program devised by the Kress Foundation required my full attention. Kress gave me no peace until I agreed to take a full-time position. Reluctantly, and within a short time, I had to make the decision to close my studio in Rome, which I did with some difficulty and not without regret. Only a few years before, together with Pietro Maria Bardi, a critic and expert on contemporary art, I had opened a gallery and studio of restoration in fifteen rooms in Piazza Augusto Imperatore,



FIG. 2. One of the rooms for restoration of paintings at the Studio d'Arte Palma, Rome, ca. 1947.



FIG. 3. An examination room with equipment for X-radiography and an ultraviolet lamp at Studio d'Arte Palma.

called the Studio d'Arte Palma (figs. 2 and 3). We employed a large staff, had the latest equipment and had already mounted important exhibitions of contemporary artists such as Morandi and Manzù. We also held one devoted to seventeenth-century Italian painting, not then in vogue, and another that was perhaps the first antique frame exhibition anywhere. The gallery was enjoying great success. Although it was difficult to extract myself from these arrangements, for various reasons I was ready for a change despite many ties to my beloved Rome.

My position with the Kress Foundation was formalized. I was named curator and conservator of the collection, for which I was paid a salary; space, materials, and other costs associated with the work on the collection were supplied by the Foundation, while I was responsible for staff salaries, my living accommodations and personal expenses. I sent invoices for each restoration, reframing, construction of shadow boxes, and so on. This was very similar to the arrangement the Foundation had with Pichetto.

By May of 1950 we had moved to a large studio just across the street from the Foundation in the tower of Carnegie Hall. Two of my assistants from the Studio d'Arte Palma came to work with me, Amleto De Santis and Giuseppe Barberi. Amleto had been in art school with me and was a very gifted painter of the *Scuola Romana*. He had worked with me for nearly ten years and had become an excellent restorer. I had also inherited three of Pichetto's assistants. Angelo Fatta was the carpenter who, under Pichetto's direction, thinned and cradled all the panel paintings. The cradles were well made but excessively heavy, and I tried to explain to him that this could cause further cracking of the original panel, but he was difficult to communicate with and set in his ways. Born in Sicily, he had come to the United States when he was twenty years old and spoke his own dialect, a mixture of Italian and Brooklyn English that was incomprehensible to me. Henry Hecht, the reliner, and Paul Kiehart, a restorer, also came to work with me.⁴ From them I learned about Pichetto's techniques and

general practice.

As John Walker relates,⁵ every painting that was offered to Kress was sent to Pichetto's studio for examination and approval and, then, if purchased, returned for cradling, relining, revarnishing and so on. Contrary to popular belief, Pichetto rarely cleaned any of the Kress paintings as they all came from dealers and had been recently restored.⁶ Normally he would correct a few restorations or add some retouches using powdered pigments bound with dammar varnish. Unfortunately he used zinc white that reacts with dammar to produce zinc dammarate, a chalky whitening of the surface.⁷ This blanching process had already begun and we were obliged to remove Pichetto's restorations as early as the 1950s, occasionally on paintings that I myself had restored for Contini-Bonacossi just after the war. In the years that followed, all of the retouches have blanched, and the varnishes have discolored.

In Pichetto's studio every painting on panel was thinned, flattened in a press and cradled. This was standard procedure for most paintings that came to America since centrally heated interiors often provoked warping or splitting of panels accustomed to the high humidity in European churches and palaces. The Pichetto cradles are instantly recognizable: fixed vertical members of varnished mahogany and sliding members of clear pine, lightly waxed, each approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ in. thick, although the size varied according to the scale of the painting. The panels treated this way have remained flat over the years, and for all their brutality, the cradles have caused surprisingly few reactions in the original wood panels. Some of the more fragile panels have developed splits along the edges of the fixed members and, in a few instances, panels that originally had pronounced convex warps have continued to flake in areas where the paint was compressed during the flattening process, especially along the joins. At that time, an alternative commonly applied remedy was to transfer paintings from their wooden panel supports to either canvas or to an inert solid support such as Masonite.⁸ Apart from stability, it was also part of an aesthetic: it

was the machine age, and American taste was for flat, mechanically smooth surfaces. Reflecting this preferred look, part of Pichetto's normal practice was not only to flatten panels, but also to reline every painting on canvas whether or not it was necessary. New linings were applied directly to previous ones. Glue paste adhesive was used; the surfaces were ironed on the front with a fifty-pound hot iron and put into a press to dry. This merciless operation flattened the impasto and brushwork of each painting. Every relined painting was furnished with a sturdy new stretcher, the edges bound with gray paper tape.

Whatever surface texture survived was obliterated by a thick layer of varnish built up using alternating layers of dammar in turpentine and shellac in alcohol, so-called "French varnish." This was trickier than it sounds; the shellac had to be applied quickly without picking up the varnish underneath. Small, flat soft-haired brushes were used for applying the shellac, which was brushed on in short strokes in one direction. Sometimes Pichetto built up a sort of dam around the picture onto which he poured varnish. He often reframed paintings with modern reproductions and others, primarily small gold-ground paintings, were fitted with shadow boxes lined with antique velvet. Pichetto contracted this out to the firm of D. Matt, which remained in business until Julius Lowy purchased it in the late 1980s.⁹

I have been asked to describe my approach to paintings, not an easy task since every painting presents its own problems. Since this is so, on consideration, the most important thing is to come to a painting with humility, great respect for the artist as well as a certain fear of touching it with solvents when there is always the risk of spoiling it. Therefore, I habitually begin by making a small test in a corner, in some unobtrusive place, never making a cleaning test in the center of a painting. Once I have cautiously determined the mildest solvent possible, the state of the painting and its sensibility, I begin by removing the varnish as evenly as possible over the entire composition, not paying undue attention to the lighter passages, but developing the relationships

between light and dark. This is particularly important with Baroque paintings. I always stop before going too deep, and prefer to leave a little patina. Many times I have been criticized, in particular by American dealers, for not having cleaned the painting enough. In my opinion, most paintings in the hands of dealers today are terribly overcleaned.

In my experience, for varnish removal, solvents that evaporate quickly are the safest. Chemicals such as dimethyl formamide, benzene, diacetone alcohol, essential oils and cellosolve stay in the paint layer, and their softening action can continue over a long period of time. I only resort to those remedies to remove tough old restorations done with oil paint. Occasionally, with much trepidation, I have used a very strong ammonia solution in certain circumstances, "stopping" it (an inaccurate term but widely used) immediately with turpentine or mineral spirits. Again, its rapid evaporation makes it safer than other choices. This technique requires courage, skill and speed.

My father was a gilder, a frame maker and a restorer of polychrome sculpture. Since I went to work in his shop at the age of fourteen, I have worked with gold leaf and, in the course of my long career, I have had a lot of experience with gold-ground paintings. Many, like the Paolo di Giovanni Fei, haven't been cleaned for years and are covered with a black crust consisting of oil, soot, glue and grime that is extremely difficult to remove. Many of these paintings have been ruined by the use of strong alkaline cleaning agents, such as the caustic soda so popular in the nineteenth century, to remove this black carapace. As I have already mentioned, I have had great success using Secco-Suardo's unguent or some variation of it to soften the hardened dirt and oil. This requires patience, as it does not work immediately. One of my earliest experiences as a restorer was with the Rospigliosi Collection in Rome, before its dispersal at auction in 1931 and 1932.¹⁰ Many paintings from the family's Palestrina villa had never been cleaned and were covered with a hardened black crust of smoke and soot from the fireplaces that

could only be removed with the pomade.

The cleaning of a gold ground is a very delicate operation. Anything containing water has a ruinous effect since the gold leaf is bound to the bole preparation with a mild gelatin solution, easily undermined by moisture. Therefore I also avoid solutions containing alcohol. I have found acetone mixtures to be safe. Sometimes I have used acetone and linseed or mineral oil. Unguents, as long as they are an emulsion containing mainly oil and just a touch of soap, can also be used safely. Often the punched decoration of the gold ground is clogged with dark brown, discolored varnish, left behind by previous cleaning. Usually I try to remove these deposits, softening them with Red Devil waterless paint remover,¹¹ applied with a tiny brush, and then cleaning them manually under the microscope, dot by punched dot. This painstakingly slow method does not harm the gold but requires a delicate touch.

Sometimes, if a gold-ground painting has not been spoiled by harsh cleaning, a gray patina, original to the painting, remains, even under subsequent layers of varnish. This is the temporary varnish described by Cennino Cennini, which was made of beaten egg whites. Originally clear, the gray tonality has developed over time. When the paint mixture is lean, dirt may have also been absorbed into the upper layers, adding to this gray cast. I treasure this and never try to remove it, which would also result in eroding the paint layer and possibly losing some of the delicate final modelling. On some gold backgrounds, a similar layer, which I suspect is the same egg white varnish, can be seen applied over the leaf and around the painted contours, suggesting that this was sometimes done as a separate step to tone down the brash effect of newly burnished gold.¹²

As for varnishing, I dislike thick glossy coatings and have always tried to use the minimum. Many of my restorations have held up remarkably well for over fifty years and I attribute this, in part, to my practice of minimal varnishing. The longevity of a restoration is important, not for the vanity of the restorer, but for the life of the painting itself, since every time the varnish is re-

moved, the solvents leach the medium. Obviously paintings of different periods have different requirements. While early paintings need the thinnest varnish possible in order to obtain a matte surface in keeping with their original appearance, Baroque paintings, particularly those with a dark preparation, require a fuller varnish. I never varnish the gold ground. Despite the treacherous varnish recipes given in early treatises, I do not believe that artists, who intrinsically have good taste, ever liked glossy surfaces on their work.¹³

I abhor the practice of thinning, cradling and transferring panel paintings. Even the warping of a panel is a sign of its age and manufacture, and it is wrong to try to change its appearance. Often I have had frames made to accommodate the curvature of a panel. Sometimes, in situations where the gesso layer has completely lost its consistency, the glue binder having degenerated from excessive humidity over a long period of time, I have had to resort to transfer. Occasionally I have done this myself, although I usually used an expert in Vienna, Wolfgang Kneisel.

Having had many unpleasant experiences with commercial reliners, and having lost several pictures to their inexperienced hands, both at the Studio d'Arte Palma and while I worked for the Kress Collection, I supervised all relining myself. Usually we used a mixture of rabbit-skin glue, Venetian turpentine, and flour that was brushed onto the front of the lining canvas and to the reverse of the original. I always faced the painting first with gelatin glue and tissue paper and cushioned the marble lining table with a thick layer of soft cardboard. The stretched lining canvas was lined up with the original and ironed from the back using normal electric irons at a low setting, continuously checking the front of the original to make sure the surface was not being damaged. I never put the paintings in a press or under heavy weights. Early on I learned through bitter experience that it is extremely dangerous to use water-containing glue paste adhesive on paintings that have never been relined, especially on seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century canvas with a dark preparation; in this case the

original canvas must be isolated with a coat of varnish or shellac, otherwise it will shrink and the color will detach.¹⁴

Returning to 1950 and my work for the Kress Collection, the paintings arrived in such numbers that, even after the move to Carnegie Hall, we were still strapped for space, and I took a second studio for woodworking, framing, relining and so on, reserving the tower for cleaning and retouching. For the moment our needs appeared to be satisfied. I had brought two more of my Roman assistants to New York, Claudio Rigosi and Bartolo Bracaglia, and a wonderful frame restorer from Florence, known only as Quarantelli, a great character of whom everyone became very fond, particularly Rush Kress, despite the fact they could not communicate with each other since Quarantelli spoke in a strict Florentine dialect. Our team was complete (see fig. 1).

The staff of the Kress Foundation consisted of Dr. Herbert Spencer, the director, Guy Emerson, head of the art project, Mary Davis, administrator, and Miss Evans, a secretary. There were six or seven trustees, one of them an Italian-American, Andrew Sordoni, with whom I was able to exchange a few words in my native language. Mr. Geiger was secretary to Rush Kress. The trustees met every two or three months and usually I joined them, particularly when they were discussing projects regarding the collection and acquisitions. I had to learn English to communicate, especially with Kress who was difficult to understand as he always talked with a cigar in his mouth. There were many things to discuss with the employees of the Foundation, all of whom were American, and so I gradually learned to speak English. William Suida helped me very much, especially with Rush Kress, and with time my English improved so much that in meetings Geiger sometimes would turn to me of all people to ask what his cigar-chomping boss had just said!

By the spring of 1950, as Emerson wrote to Kress, "Things have been moving here!" The Regional Gallery Project, as it had been named, was well underway, with collections being formed for San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Seattle and

lists made for the 1951 Kress exhibition at the National Gallery of Art. The art mission of the Foundation had been defined: a large Kress Collection for the National Gallery of Art and smaller ones for eighteen regional museums, the remainder destined primarily for university study collections across the United States. It became clear that to do justice to the reputation of the Collection, important pictures would be acquired for all projects. The National Gallery of Art encouraged this, and Rush Kress was pleased to hear from John Walker that the market was propitious at that moment in comparison to twenty years earlier when Andrew Mellon was collecting. In retrospect it really was golden era for buying art. The goal was to make "the Kress Collection *unique in history*, a *national* collection, and not a Washington collection with eighteen or twenty subsidiary collections of inferior quality."¹⁵

Soon after I arrived Wildenstein offered us two important paintings from Count Vittorio Cini's Collection that had been sold during the war to raise money to ransom Cini from an underground cell in Dachau where he was interned because of his opposition to the Fascist regime.¹⁶ His misfortune was a great boon to us as we were able to buy Botticelli's portrait of *Giuliano de' Medici* and Benozzo Gozzoli's enchanting *The Dance of Salome*, both now in the National Gallery of Art.

Luck again favored us when Baron Heinrich Thyssen of Lugano, in temporary financial difficulty after the war, was forced to sell several paintings from his collection; we acquired the Altdorfer triptych, the double-sided panel by Dürer and Memling's *Saint Veronica*.

Acquisitions were not always so easily come by. For the 1951 National Gallery of Art exhibition and the first three Regional Collections, we scoured the premises of every dealer we knew for suitable paintings. A group of twenty-one paintings was purchased from Contini-Bonacossi, which included the five large altarpieces from the Cook Collection at Richmond. It was a period of frenetic activity as we called at Wildenstein, Knoedler, Mont, Drey, Duveen, Weitzner, Seligmann, Koetser, Rosenberg and Stiebel, and



Fig. 4. Mario Modestini and Robert Manning in the storage room at Huckleberry Hill, Pennsylvania, in the 1950s.

French & Company as well as any number of smaller galleries to select paintings and sculpture for prices that now seem absurdly low.

Sifting through and evaluating all these possible acquisitions, keeping in mind what was wanted by Washington and the Regional Collections with whom we were already in contact, was complicated by the holdings in storage with which the new candidates had to be compared and integrated. Often we found that we already possessed a better painting by the artist. The process was cumbersome since access to the warehoused pictures and especially to the decorative arts was difficult. Lists were vetted and meetings were held, attended by Rush Kress, Guy Emerson, Herbert Spencer, and me for the Foundation and John Walker and sometimes David Finley for the National Gallery of Art.

Rush Kress, who as a businessman liked streamlined operating procedures, was frustrated. He conceived a plan to make a single storage and work space on a property called Huckleberry Hill that he owned in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. In addition to the practicality of having the entire collection together, with the beginning of hostilities in Korea he was infected by the general fear of an atomic attack on New York City and wished to protect the Kress Collection. By October 1, 1951 it was finished, and we went to inspect it prior to the board meeting.

Huckleberry Hill was very remote indeed; the

nearest town, Newfoundland, population 200, was five miles away, an unlikely target. The art facility consisted of three stories. The ground floor was a bombproof bunker large enough to store the entire Kress Collection. It was fitted with rolling racks on which the paintings were arranged by school and period so Foundation and National Gallery of Art staff as well as directors of the prospective Regional Collections could easily examine them (fig. 4). Above the storage was a large restoration studio (figs. 5 and 6). There was a carpenter's shop for Angelo Fatta, fully equipped with woodworking machinery, and a separate studio for Quarantelli, the framer. The X-radiograph machine was in a lead-sealed room in the basement. There was a photo studio although we lacked a staff photographer. Robert Manning, William Suida's son-in-law, had been engaged as my assistant to be in charge of the record keeping, and he engaged a photographer I recall only as Colden to come to Huckleberry Hill for several weeks at a time. We ourselves had photo equipment and whiled away many a winter evening recording the work in progress so as not to lose time waiting for the photographer's visits. The unsatisfactory Colden was ultimately replaced by Angelo Lomeo and his wife Sonja Bullaty—two real artists who made the best photographs of paintings I have ever seen. They became great friends.

The studio was fully equipped with every conceivable tool for restoration and examination to facilitate our work: microscopes, a fluoroscope, a custom-made apparatus consisting of a platform mounted on a hydraulic lift so we could work on oversized paintings, a press for replacing faulty cradles on panel paintings, relining, and so on. When I hired Gustav Berger, later to become famous for his work with adhesives, he built us one of the first vacuum hot tables for wax relining according to the Dutch method.

In addition to Robert Manning, somewhat later, Sandrino Contini-Bonacossi, the nephew of Count Alessandro, was also engaged by the Foundation and both men were a great help assisting me in the overwhelming details of the Regional Gallery Project. Among their many



FIG. 5. The studio at Huckleberry Hill in the 1950s.



FIG. 6. The studio at Huckleberry Hill in the 1950s.

assignments was the record-keeping function. It was essential to know at a glance the location of each painting, its status in terms of the National Gallery of Art and regional gallery directors' choices, its condition, whether or not it had been restored, if it needed restoration, reframing, and to have the appropriate photographic documentation as an *aide mémoire*. In a memorandum from Guy Emerson to Rush Kress, the importance of record keeping is stressed and mention is made of a card kept for each painting, detailing the restoration. Although I have been asked many times about this card file, frankly I do not remember it; if there was one, it no longer exists, either at the Kress Foundation or in the National Gallery of Art Archives. What I do remember is that somewhat belatedly, Mary Davis, who had become the director of the Foundation, engaged Henry Hecht, my former reliner, to make condition and restoration reports, including Pichetto's work, for every painting. The records that he made were all done at more or less the same time, and, as I recall, often from memory. Sometimes Henry asked me for clarification, and it's apparent from the original handwritten restoration reports that I reviewed some of them and made corrections. The information in these reports was transcribed by Fern Rusk Shapley for the Kress catalogues. She often asked me to explain the condition of certain paintings, which, on examination, seemed not to square with the records. At that point, the paintings were already dispersed, and we relied on photographs, X-radiographs, and my good but not faultless memory. Time did not permit me to properly assess the condition of all 2,000 and some odd paintings and, not infrequently, egregious errors found their way into print. For example, the little *Madonna and Child* attributed to Leonardo in Verrocchio's workshop is described as "abraded in flesh tones and hair of the Virgin and Child; the mantle and the landscape have suffered from drastic cleaning." I do not know where this evaluation came from, as I consider the small painting, which I bought from Duveen's, to be in an excellent state, although I never cleaned it. In many cases, the

records are correct and therefore valuable, but they cannot be relied upon entirely, and we continue to find many errors.

Shortly after my arrival Rush Kress asked me to come to 1020 Fifth Avenue to look at the part of the collection hanging there. He proudly stopped in front of a portrait of a woman and asked me what I thought of his "Leonardo." I was sorry to have to tell him that it was by Giampietrino. It had recently been acquired from Duveen. Kress immediately called the Foundation's lawyer, O.V.W. Hawkins of Duer, Strong, and Whitehouse. We all went off to Duveen's, at that time still at Fifth Avenue and 57th Street, in a magnificent beaux-arts building by Carrere and Hastings, now demolished. The negotiation was complicated by the fact that Suida had published the picture as a Leonardo. Notwithstanding this inconvenient detail, since he did not wish to lose an important client, Edward Fowles of Duveen agreed that we could choose something else from their stock. I spotted a beautiful portrait by Peter Paul Rubens of the *Marchesa Brigida Spinola Doria* and a small *Madonna and Child*, called studio of Verrocchio that I believed was by the young Leonardo working in the master's shop. After further negotiations, it was agreed that we could have the two paintings for a small additional payment, and the deal was settled. The Rubens is today in the National Gallery of Art as is the little *Madonna and Child*, attributed to Leonardo. I found an antique fifteenth-century tabernacle for the *Madonna and Child* to replace the Ferruccio Vannoni frame provided by Duveen.

When I visited Washington for the first time with Rush Kress, David Finley and John Walker took us on a tour of the galleries. It was the beginning of a long and strained relationship with Walker. I noticed several fakes on exhibition, two "Vermeers" in the Mellon Collection, and in the Kress Collection, a *Madonna and Child* given to Alesso Baldovinetti that had been bought from Duveen for \$300,000, a huge sum in 1939 when it was purchased on the recommendation of Bernard Berenson who congratulated Samuel Kress on his acquisition of "one of the most beautiful Renais-

sance paintings in America.” “BB” was nearly a god for Walker, who had been his pupil, and continued to manipulate him from Settignano. I saw that the painting had originally been on panel and had been transferred to canvas. I was quite sure that it had come from a famous Italian dealer and forger, Baron Michele Lazzaroni, who sold many pictures to Duveen. Lazzaroni usually bought paintings by minor artists and then had his restorer in Paris, who was called Verzetta, turn them into “masterpieces” by some important Renaissance artist, although sometimes he would also ruin perfectly good pictures just for the pleasure of altering them. Walker was extremely upset by my assertion. To prove my opinion, I offered to X-ray it, and about a month later it was sent to New York. Under the “Baldovinetti” was a quite different *Madonna and Child* which seemed to be by Pier Francesco Fiorentino, a prolific imitator of Pesellino. The forger had copied a photograph, printed in reverse, of a famous Baldovinetti in the Louvre. Even when Walker saw the X-radiograph, he was not entirely convinced, and he asked me to clean the painting. My work revealed the half-ruined Pier Francesco Fiorentino that is still in storage at the National Gallery of Art (figs. 7 and 8).

After the 1951 Kress exhibition in Washington, a moratorium was declared on new purchases while, python-like, we digested the enormous number of paintings already in the collection. Suddenly, in 1952, John Walker learned that a Grünewald *Crucifixion*, privately owned, had been released for sale in Germany, negotiations with the authorities there having broken down. Guy Emerson broached the matter to a skeptical Rush Kress: “an emergency matter has come up which I hesitate to lay before you . . . however our policy of not buying paintings at the moment always had the qualification that we must consider exceptional items when they came on the market.”¹⁷ The price was \$260,000, and if we had not acted quickly any number of other buyers would have snapped it up. Kress was not particularly impressed by the photographs, but was ultimately persuaded, and it is the only Grünewald



FIG. 7. *Madonna and Child*, repainted in the style of Alesso Baldovinetti, mixed media, transferred from wood panel to canvas, 29 1/2 x 21 1/2 in. (75 x 54.5 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Before cleaning.



FIG. 8. *Madonna and Child*, the underlying Pier Francesco Fiorentino, tempera, transferred from wood panel to canvas, 29 1/2 x 21 1/2 in. (75 x 54.5 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. During cleaning.



FIG. 9. Frame exhibition at Studio d'Arte Palma, ca. 1947.

in America.

A second Kress exhibition in Washington was in the works for 1955, and several of the Regional Collections had opened to great acclaim in 1953. We again began to actively acquire paintings, not only in New York but also in London and especially Paris. Walker and I visited the Villa Vittoria in Florence, the magnificent residence and private museum of Contini-Bonacossi (now the Palazzo dei Congressi) where we met with the Count and Gualtiero Volterra. I took Walker aside and made suggestions about what we might choose from the large group of pictures being offered by Contini-Bonacossi; these included a work by the Master of the Badia a Isola, Titian's ceiling of Saint John the Evangelist, Bronzino's portrait of Eleanora of Toledo, and an important Savoldo. Although we tried to be discreet, Contini-Bonacossi realized what was going on and, when Walker left, made his displeasure clear: he was accustomed to selling the entire lot to the Kress Foundation without anyone's interference. Although he and Volterra were old friends, my priority was to buy only

the best for the Kress Collection, and among the paintings offered there were a number of secondary works that we did not need.

I was very keen that the paintings should all have beautiful frames. My father had collected antique frames, as did Contini-Bonacossi, who always tried to find an appropriate period frame not only for works in his own collection but also for the paintings he sold to Samuel and Rush Kress. Over the years I added to my father's frame collection and, as I mentioned earlier, mounted the first exhibition ever of antique frames at my Studio d'Arte Palma in Rome in the late 1940s (fig. 9). When I closed the gallery in Rome I sold my frame collection to Contini-Bonacossi. In 1953 the Foundation bought about 500 frames from him, including some from my collection. We used these to reframe paintings whenever possible, not only for Washington but also in the Regional Collections.

We removed many of the modern frames Duveen had used, especially on the Italian paintings. Duveen had a wonderful frame maker, sometime forger, in Florence, Ferruccio Vannoni,

who designed quirky, beautifully crafted modern interpretations of Renaissance models, each one slightly different. They are interesting in themselves and immediately proclaim their provenance, which was the intention. Quarantelli, our Florentine framer, was a magician at cleverly adapting antique frames so they looked as if they had never been touched. Naturally, it was not possible to use every frame. Those remaining were given to the Metropolitan Museum and the National Gallery of Art.

For years I had used egg tempera glazed with drained oils or watercolor for retouching and dammar as a varnish. Although I had always used varnishes as thinly as possible on the theory that it was the varnish, not the original painting that deteriorated, I still sought a more stable alternative to the traditional materials, all of which altered or darkened. I hoped that some of the new synthetic resins might be suitable as varnishes and retouching mediums. At John Walker's suggestion I contacted Dr. Robert Feller, a scientist at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, whose work on artists' materials was funded by the Mellon Foundation, to collaborate on a project to find a new retouching medium.

He supplied me with a number of different synthetic resins: various methacrylates, polyvinyl alcohol and polyvinyl acetates, all of which were considered to be stable. We began to use the new materials in 1953. In the beginning these synthetic polymers were quite difficult to handle but with persistence and by altering the solvents and the viscosity of the solution, we finally came up with a satisfactory application technique. We settled on a resin, a polyvinyl acetate made by Union Carbide with a relatively low molecular weight classified by the manufacturer as PVA AYAB. An adhesives company supplied it under the name of Palmer's A70, that is, a seventy-percent solution in acetone that we diluted to an eight-percent solution in methyl or ethyl alcohol, approximately the viscosity of a retouching varnish. For certain purposes we wanted a more slowly evaporating solvent as an additive and chose methyl cellosolve, again on

Feller's suggestion.

The degree of matte and gloss could be adjusted by locally varnishing with more medium. The alcohol diluent evaporated very quickly so that it was possible to build up the restoration without picking up the color that had already been put down. At first we added a bit of bleached beeswax, although I later abandoned that practice, as it was really not necessary. I continued to use watercolor for some glazes and to patinate the underpaint.

The first painting I restored using the PVA AYAB medium was a Perugino *Madonna and Child*, now in the National Gallery of Art. When I saw it recently, the restoration had not altered in the slightest way. Hanging nearby is a painting by Signorelli, *Madonna and Child with Saints and Angels*, that I had restored only a few years earlier using egg tempera, watercolor and drained oils; those retouches are now distinctly discolored as are those of the Mantegna portrait I restored with the same technique. Other paintings in Washington restored in the 1950s using PVA AYAB include the severely damaged *Allegory* by Piero di Cosimo, varnished with Talens Rembrandt and wax, the Ercole Roberti, *The Wife of Hasdrupal and her Children*, and the Giovanni Bellini *Madonna and Child*. All of them still look perfect. This is also true of an extensively damaged altarpiece by El Greco in the Metropolitan Museum, *The Vision of Saint John*, that I restored in 1956 with the new resins. The late Dr. Hubert von Sonnenburg, former Chairman of Paintings Conservation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, who shared my preference for thin varnishes, revived the dull surface with a spray of solvent many years later.

I also abandoned dammar varnish in favor of one made from a synthetic resin, a polycyclohexanone condensation resin, known as AW 2. I have always used the commercial formulation made by Talens called Rembrandt Varnish, developed as a conservation varnish.¹⁸ Feller was experimenting with other resins. His methacrylate varnish, called Mellon 27H, was colorless and had good handling properties. I used it on a number of paintings until one day an alarmed Feller sent out a general

alert that new aging tests demonstrated that the resin cross-linked under certain circumstances—that is, the varnish might become insoluble over time. The National Gallery of Art was very concerned by this news. In December 1957 I went to Washington to meet with Feller, John Walker, Guy Emerson, Perry Cott, curator of sculpture, and Frank Sullivan, a former Pichetto assistant and preparator at the National Gallery of Art, and the entire conversation was taped. Feller explained the cross-linking of 27H, and he urged us to remove it from all the paintings that we had already restored; he was extremely nervous, not wanting to be blamed for anything that might happen in the future. In fact, I habitually put a coat of dammar, Talens Rembrandt Varnish, polyvinyl acetate or beeswax under Mellon 27H, using it only as a final varnish. I had to sign a paper that I had been advised of the danger and guarantee that I always used an intervening varnish under 27H. So much for artificial aging. Not only has 27H remained soluble in mild hydrocarbon mixtures, but a bottle has sat on my windowsill for fifty years and is still water white. On paintings, I have noticed that it has a tendency to become dull and slightly gray, like all the methacrylates. Along with everyone else I abandoned 27H after Feller's warning.

Pichetto's often gratuitous restorations continued to blanch, an unsightly phenomenon that affected many of the Kress paintings already in the permanent collection of the National Gallery of Art. On our periodic visits, we glazed the whitened areas but shortly thereafter the blanching returned. The possible causes of blanched and darkened varnishes and the materials that were subject to these alterations were the focus of much discussion with Feller. In 1959 we made up panels using eight pigments mixed with three different whites: lead white, zinc white, and titanium white in varying proportions. Each of these was painted out with all the commonly used retouching mediums such as egg tempera, dammar, and so on, as well as the new AYAB, along with some other resins supplied by Feller, and the samples were coated with many different varnishes, both natural and

synthetic. Each panel had one section covered with Plexiglas, one with aluminum so it was protected from the light, and one section exposed to direct sunlight.¹⁹ We left these samples under the skylights of the National Gallery of Art for eight months. The results demonstrated, among other things, that the colors bound with AYAB had not altered and that the combination of dammar and zinc white produced blanching. Over the years Feller identified other causes of blanching. In 1959 blanched retouches on a Canaletto, *The Piazzetta*, were found to result from use of the unstable anatase form of titanium oxide, a photochemically active variety of the crystal. This alteration of titanium has given the pigment an undeservedly bad reputation, especially in Germany and Austria. The rutile crystalline form, which one must be careful to confirm, is completely stable.

Feller was one of many visitors to Huckleberry Hill in the early 1950s. By this time the dispersal of the entire Kress Collection was well underway as was our principal task, the preparation of hundreds of paintings destined for the National Gallery of Art and the regional museums. Walker made an occasional day trip, and the directors of the Regional Collections came to choose paintings for their collections. For overnight guests, Newfoundland boasted a small hotel. Some of our more interested clients, such as Walter Heil of the M.H. De Young Memorial Museum of San Francisco, visited often to see the progress of the restoration on their paintings and what was new in the ever-expanding Kress Collection. The winter snows reached two or three feet in height. Often we opened the door in the morning to find a white wall blocking the entrance, and we could not go out until the plow came to clear the drive. This did not impede our work as our living quarters were on the third floor, right above the studio. We worked from Monday morning until Friday afternoon when everyone returned to New York for the weekend. Occasionally we would be snowed in, cursing the beastly weather.

We had a housekeeper and a cook and took all our meals together at a long table. I was at the head, and everyone else sat in their accustomed

place. Relations were not always smooth as the various personalities conflicted: Angelo Fatta and Quarantelli in particular did not get along. Paul Kiehart often fanned the flames of this conflict, and poor Angelo, with his strange Brooklyn dialect, was the butt of everyone's jokes. The atmosphere was a bit like a military barracks; in fact, one of our cooks had been an army chef who made soup using a piece of lard attached to a string. Once a museum director sent us a present of wonderful filet steaks that our cook reduced to tasteless cardboard. He didn't last long. There was a nearby trout stream, and in the good weather everyone fished after work. It was not wise to venture too far into the woods that were inhabited by bears and wildcats.

As word of the program spread, many cities applied to the Foundation. Most of them did not have a museum. One of the requirements was that the recipients provide a suitable space to house the collection. When the project was approved, the directors or representatives of the various regional

museums would come to the Pennsylvania bunker to look at the collection. Some directors had a preference for a particular school that was not represented in the collection or that reflected the ethnic background of their region and would request that the Foundation acquire paintings to fill in those gaps. We made such purchases often. Tintoretto was very popular, and altogether we bought fifteen canvases by Jacopo and his studio. Each museum was given approximately forty paintings. Often a director would ask my advice about the attribution, the condition, and the quality of the works; this I offered dispassionately, not wishing to favor one museum over the other. The normal procedure began with a visit to storage where the paintings hung on numbered sliding screens arranged according to period and school, easy to locate. This initial examination was followed by lunch with the staff during which the paintings under consideration were discussed. In the afternoon we returned to the storerooms and again looked at paintings, making new selections,



FIG. 10. Visiting the National Gallery of Art in 1951. From left to right: Sandrino Contini-Bonacossi, David Finley, Perry Cott, Rush Kress, Colonel McBride, *unknown*, Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi, Fred Geiger, Guy Emerson, Patricia Volterra, Gualtiero Volterra, Mario Modestini, and *unknown*.

eliminating some paintings and adding others.

Rush Kress was obsessed with every detail regarding the display of the Kress Collection at the National Gallery of Art: how the paintings were appended, at which angle, the wall color, the labels on the frames, how didactic material would be made available since he disliked wall labels, the lighting, and so on. Periodically we would go to Washington to make an inspection of the Kress galleries. On several occasions Contini-Bonacossi, whose collection at Villa Vittoria was impeccably displayed and whose advice Kress greatly valued on all such matters, would accompany him to Washington for an inspection tour together with a large retinue (fig. 10). He held the Regional Collections to a similarly high standard. I would travel to each city, accompanied by Guy Emerson and the lighting designer, Abe Feder, to install the Kress galleries, and Kress joined us for the opening ceremonies. On certain occasions he was deeply disappointed, for he had very clear tastes. In Seattle the young curator, Sherman Lee, had painted the galleries black. Kress was furious and shot off memos to all and sundry.

Rush Kress was not autocratic but instinctively generous by nature, as for example when he learned that Contini-Bonacossi's nephew Sandrino was in difficulty, he immediately brought him to New York to work for the Foundation; however, he could also be fanatically parsimonious. Once at Huckleberry Hill, a large number of paintings arrived from Contini-Bonacossi, a two-or-three million-dollar shipment, very elegantly wrapped. As we eagerly cut the ribbons to open the packages, I noticed Kress carefully picking them up and rolling them!

One of the most interesting characters to take part in the regional gallery collections was the legendary Carl Hamilton. He came to Pennsylvania with the director of the Raleigh Museum in North Carolina, to whom, being a native of that city, he had offered himself as an advisor. His credentials were impressive, as he had once been a great collector himself. Rush Kress invited Hamilton to dinner at 1020 Fifth Avenue, where he always asked someone to say grace. Hamilton,

whom Kress had never met, offered to give thanks for the meal and quoted a long passage from the Bible. Kress was a passionate devotee of the scriptures, and he asked his guest if he knew the Bible well. Hamilton replied that he knew it by heart. Kress was jubilant and sent one of the children to get *The Book*. As he began a line, Hamilton finished it. They became great friends after this, and Kress directed me to select a particularly fine group of paintings for the museum in Raleigh. I knew that they already had a good collection of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century paintings acquired by Valentiner and that they needed a collection of early and Renaissance Italian paintings and a few important Baroque canvases. Altarpieces from the Cook Collection by Massimo Stanzione and Domenichino had been offered to the National Gallery of Art. Walker, naturally, was not interested. Nor did he want to take a five-panel polyptych by Giotto and assistants originally painted for the Bardi Chapel in Santa Croce that we had assembled from different dealers. When I offered it to him he refused because, he said, they already had a Giotto. "Mario, we might consider taking the central panel but not the four saints." I bit my tongue but was appalled by his ignorance. A few days later Hamilton came to talk about the schedule for consigning the paintings to Raleigh, the catalogue and so on. I said to him, "Carl, I had a thought. In order to complete the Kress Collection in your museum you should have one painting of world-class importance, the Giotto polyptych from the Bardi Chapel." He looked at me in amazement and nearly fainted.

Like Berenson, Walker did not understand painting after the Renaissance. He turned down the great Caravaggio *Saint John the Baptist* because Berenson considered it a copy of the painting in Naples. On that occasion my distress was so great that Rush Kress authorized me to try to buy the painting anyway. Unfortunately it was too late as Kansas City had already reserved it. Washington has yet to have an opportunity to add a Caravaggio to the collection. Nor was he particularly enthusiastic about the Saint Lucy Altarpiece²⁰ or the great François Clouet portrait

of Diane de Poitiers in her bath (*A Lady in Her Bath*). We decided to buy both those paintings despite his lack of interest and ultimately, if somewhat reluctantly, he took them.

One morning a woman came to the Foundation with a photograph of an unpublished painting by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, *The Empire of Flora*, for which she was asking \$15,000. It was in excellent condition under a bit of yellow varnish. After it was cleaned we sent it to Washington. Walker and his curators all agreed that it was by Giandomenico Tiepolo and sent it back to New York. Disgusted by the Gallery's response, at that moment I was assembling the collection for Walter Heil, the director of the museum in San Francisco and a good connoisseur whom I have mentioned as a visitor to Huckleberry Hill. I showed him the picture and explained why the National Gallery of Art had rejected it. "Are they blind?" he exclaimed. The painting is today considered by one and all to be by Giovanni Battista and is one of the masterpieces of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

One day I received a phone call from Walter Hoentschel of Knoedler Galleries asking me to come and see a Titian portrait of the Doge Andrea Gritti that they had acquired in Vienna. My first thought was that it must be a copy of the famous portrait from the Czernin Collection, but I decided to look at it anyway. It was in the Morgan Manhattan Storage Warehouse. The painting had been rolled, fortunately face out, and we laid it out on the floor. It was in excellent condition under an old discolored varnish. It had never been relined, and there was a drawing, a study of the Doge, on the back. Astounded, I thought that it must have been stolen but Hoentschel assured me that the director of the Österreichische Galerie in Vienna, Ernst H. Buschbeck, considered it the work of Palma Giovane, and had granted it an export license. I immediately called Rush Kress who was at the Foundation that morning and told him he must come straight away and bring Suida with him. Needless to say, as soon as they arrived we bought it on the spot. It is exceedingly rare to find a

painting of the sixteenth century that has never been relined. The linen was in good condition. When the painting arrived in my studio I simply had the edges reinforced with strips of canvas and mounted it to a stretcher. I searched among our collection of antique frames looking for something suitable. I found a sixteenth-century Venetian frame by Luca Mombello, Titian's frame maker, which was about the right size. I had the frame sent to the studio and put the painting in it. To my wonder and amazement, it fit perfectly. As paintings were not standard sizes in the sixteenth century this coincidence was almost spooky.

I was often in and out of New York to visit dealers, attend Foundation meetings and also made frequent trips to Washington. So that I could work on as many paintings as possible, in 1954 we took a studio at 16 East 52nd Street, where I worked with some of my assistants while we continued to commute to Huckleberry Hill preparing for the 1955 exhibition at the National Gallery of Art. Finally, after seven years at Huckleberry Hill, my assistants went on strike. The Korean War had ended two years earlier. I talked the situation over with Guy Emerson who brought it up with Rush Kress. We decided to bring the restorers back to New York and found a studio at 250 West 57th Street in the Fisk Building, just across the street from the offices of the Foundation at number 221. This arrangement made it easier for the directors and curators of the regional museums to follow the work on their collections. Storage was still at Huckleberry Hill where framing and panel work continued to be done. Angelo Fatta the carpenter and the Florentine framer Quarantelli were both men of a certain age, one with grown children and the other a widower who didn't mind being in an out-of-the-way spot. After the move the atmosphere of the studio improved greatly, and there was a return to the easy, friendly and sociable relationships that we previously enjoyed and which are essential to any group of people who work closely together.

Throughout the 1950s it was possible to buy important Italian Baroque pictures for \$8,000

to \$15,000 dollars and sometimes for less. We paid \$1,200 for the masterpiece by Donato Creti, *Alexander the Great Threatened by his Father* that was exhibited in the 1955 exhibition along with the early, Caravaggesque Simon Vouet *Saint Matthew*. Both have remained in Washington. Rush Kress was very much in favor of these acquisitions, which he called “bucolic” pictures, partly because they were a great bargain.²¹ One of my favorite dealers in New York was David Koetser, who had great taste for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italian paintings and a large stock. We bought thirty-two paintings from him despite Walker’s indifference. The 1961 exhibition of recent acquisitions at the National Gallery of Art included many of these paintings. Suida and I campaigned for several Baroque galleries in Washington. To my great disappointment, Walker was not willing to take more than two or three of the works we had lent. So the Regional Collections became the recipients of masterpieces by Tanzio da Varallo, Sebastiano Ricci, Gaulli, Ceruti, Traversi, and Magnasco, and other paintings that I had hoped would go to Washington.

Numerous and important acquisitions were also made of non-Italian paintings, among them two portraits by Jacques Louis David, including his full-length Napoleon, three paintings by Ingres, canvases by El Greco, van der Hamen, and Zurbarán to name just a few. Our purchases of Netherlandish paintings were outstanding and of great importance to the National Gallery of Art which possessed only a few works of this school. We added German works by Dürer, Cranach, Holbein, Grünewald, Altdorfer, Baldung Grien, and Flemish, Netherlandish, and Dutch paintings by Robert Campin, Memling, the Master of the Saint Lucy Legend, Hieronymus Bosch, Mabuse, van Orley, Sanraedam, Ruisdael, Jan Steen, Pieter de Hooch, van Beyeren and, of course, Rubens. Most of these paintings were acquired from Knoedler, Wildenstein, Rosenberg and Stiebel, Seligmann, Mont, Koetser, Mitchell Samuels of French and Company, and Schaeffer Galleries.

The final deeds of gift were made and a great exhibition held in Washington in 1961. The col-

lection in Washington consisted of 365 paintings, 82 pieces of sculpture and over 1,300 other works—medals, plaquettes and small bronzes acquired from the Dreyfus Collection. We had accomplished a great deal and were very proud of “The Kress Collection” that we had assembled and dispersed far and wide across the nation according to Samuel Kress’s conviction that art and beauty were essential for the education of young Americans and the formation of good character and values.

I have some regrets. Primarily, of course, that we were not able to form the collection of the National Gallery of Art as we wished. Also I would have liked to have had time to restore many other paintings from the Kress Collection, particularly those in Washington—something we had always intended to do. Consequently many important works still have the thick and discolored varnishes added by Pichetto, now dull, dusty and streaky, and full of blanched retouches.

Another cherished project often discussed was a Kress institute to train paintings conservators and, in particular, young Americans, because, at that time, most restorers came from Europe. Although there are several restorers whom I consider my pupils, the frenetic activity from 1949 to 1961 did not allow time to realize this dream, a great pity since we had the chance at that moment to exert great influence on the approach to restoration of Old Master paintings in this country. It might have been possible to avoid some of the destruction and controversies that later ensued.

I remained consultant to the Kress Foundation and also to the National Gallery of Art for many years, working closely with Fern Rusk Shapley, Ulrich Middeldorf and Colin Eisler on the Kress catalogues and visiting Kress Foundation restoration projects in Europe. The Kress Collection is of great importance to me to this day.

After the deeds of gift had been made to Washington and to the Regional Collections, I was moved by a letter from Franklin Murphy, the long-time Chairman of the Board of the Kress Foundation and a man I greatly respected.

It is dated April 2, 1962:

Dear Mario:

Now that the Kress Gift to the Nation has been consummated and this project draws to a close, I want to express to you personally and on behalf of all of the Trustees our enormous gratitude for your dedication in making this whole thing possible. It is my own view that you have been a crucial enzyme in this entire process. Your competence—indeed, virtuosity in restoration has been the central fact in this project, and, in a way, the collection is as much a monument to you as to anyone else.

Jackals may snarl and vultures may swoop but the reality remains serenely unaware of both.

All of us in the Kress Foundation and, in fact, the American public generally, will always be in your debt.

I was fifty-five years old. For a brief moment I considered returning to Europe, perhaps to London, but soon had more work than I could handle in my studio on 52nd Street and began a new chapter in my professional life.

Through my friendships with Mary Davis, Franklin Murphy, and Marilyn Perry, I stayed in close touch with the Kress Collections and was often called on for advice about the dispersed Kress Collection. Shortly after becoming director, Marilyn Perry wisely decided that a review of the Regional Collections Project was in order. I was most gratified to hear that most of the restorations we had done in the 1950s had held up very well. However, the survey revealed that a number of paintings, primarily those that had had no attention since early in the twentieth century and those that had passed through Pichetto's hands, now required work. As I have said, I always regretted that there was not time to put everything in order. Since then many Kress paintings from the Regional and Study Collections have come to the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts where I have been happy to follow the restoration. At this point in my life it is a delight to see some old friends again and to pass on my experience to young conservators, and, in particular, the nearly lost skill of restoring gold-ground paintings.

Dianne Dwyer Modestini is a paintings conservator, consultant to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and Adjunct Professor at the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

Mario Modestini was the Curator and Conservator of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation until 1961. Based in New York, he continued to restore paintings and advise on questions of connoisseurship to an international clientele including important museums and private collections.

NOTES

1. Memorandum of Guy Emerson to Rush Kress, January 22, 1949, Kress Foundation Archives.
2. Letter CCB to RHK, February 9, 1949. "As I explained to you at length in my last letter, the choice of a candidate who possesses the many necessary qualities restricts the horizon considerably. Only one man—in my opinion—has my complete and unconditional confidence; that is the man who has the keeping of my own collection and to whom I have always entrusted the most important works. Naturally I have always been very jealous of this man, as I consider him irreplaceable; therefore I have been faced with a serious case of conscience . . . B.B. whom I believe has always had a very high opinion of the way in which my pictures are kept, did not even think I would be willing to suggest him; but when I told him the news he seemed very pleased and agreed entirely and he has also fully understood and appreciated this solution . . . This man has the temperament of a Master. His technical and artistic knowledge and his ability to inculcate into others love and care in their work make him substantially quite unique . . . I do not think he would be able to dispose of more than six months of the year for the U.S."
3. Count Giovanni Secco-Suardo, *Il Restauratore dei Dipinti*. Milano: Ulrico Hoepli, 1918, p. 557. "N. 3. Pomata ammolente. Predni sapon bianco di solda, di uello che serve per uso di toaletta, parti una; grasso di vitello stato bollito e stacciato, parti due; olio d'olivo del migliore, parti tre ed acqua parti sei. Tagliuzza minutamente. Meti il sapone e il tutto in vaso di tera vetrato, ed a fuoco moderato, sempre rimescolando, portalo all'ebollizione, e lascialo bollire sino a che quegli ingredienti si siano bene incorporati, ed abbiano formato una pomata di mediocre densità. Versala in vaso di terra o di vetro, lasciala raffreddare, poi coprila e conserva la pe' tuoi bosogni. Dura indefinitivamente."
4. The other Pichetto assistant, Frank Sullivan, was a sort of handyman. By some curious logic, John Walker hired him to be the restorer of the National Gallery of Art. Walker claimed that Sullivan never touched the collection, but several times I saw him working on Paul Mellon's English paintings, relining four or five at one time; he spoiled many of them.
5. John Walker, *Self Portrait with Donors*. Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1974, pp. 142–3.

6. Although this would appear to conflict with Ann Hoeningswald's paper in this volume, while it seems clear that Pichetto did not clean paintings offered to Kress, he must have cleaned paintings for his other clients.
7. This so-called "Pichetto whitening" was noted quite early by Modestini and further studied with a series of test panels that suggested the role of near-ultraviolet radiation in the chalking of the inpainting film. See Robert Feller, "Problems in retouching: chalking of intermediate layers," *Bulletin of the American Group-IIC*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (1966), pp. 32–4. Other phenomena, such as chemical interaction between the basic pigment and acidic binder, may also play a role. Zinc pigments also seem to play a role in the chalking of original painting. See Karin Groen, "Materieel onderzoek aan schilderijen met wit mitgeslagen Parijzen en de (on) mogelijkheden van restauratie" in *Schilderkunst Materieel en Techniek*. Amsterdam: Centraal Laboratorium voor Onderzoek van Voorwerpen van Kunst en Wetenschap, 1989, pp. 38–46.
8. For example, the restorer William Suhr had a Viennese worker, Eduard Kneisel, in his studio, who routinely transferred every painting on panel. Kneisel's name was cited in a recent book, *The Faustian Bargain*, by Jonathan Petropoulos (Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 279), where he is identified as working for the Nazis' art looting program in Poland and where the writer says that Kneisel "reportedly" later worked for The Frick Collection, which he did not.
9. Pichetto's prices for this work were very high. A memorandum in the files of the Kress Foundation records the sum owed to Pichetto's estate after his death and the writer's (presumably Emerson) consternation at the difference between my fees and those of my predecessor, which were three times greater.
10. Mario Modestini, "Le vendite Rospigliosi: i ricordi di un testimone" in Angela Negro (ed.), *La Collezione Rospigliosi: la Quadreria e la Commitenza Artistica di una Famiglia Patrizia a Roma nel Sei e Settecento*. Rome: Argos, 1999, pp. 91–3.
11. The product is no longer made. Sue Ann Chui, with the cooperation of the manufacturer, developed the following formula: to make Red Devil Liquid #99 from Zip Strip Trigger Spray: to 100g of Trigger Spray add 15.4g methanol, 26.1g toluene, and 19g acetone.
12. Painting in the Pinacoteca Nazionale in the Bologna gallery where you clearly see gray varnish applied over the gold ground and skirting the contours of the figures. Newly burnished gold is extremely shiny and metallic and while this may have been acceptable in the fourteenth century, I think some of the more sophisticated formal values that later emerged would have clashed with unpatinated, highly burnished gold. One approach to key the painted passages with the gold ground was the development of elaborately punched, incised and glazed treatments of the background. An egg-white varnish would have made the gold slightly matte.
13. See: Helen Glanville, "Varnish, grounds, viewing distance, and lighting: some notes on seventeenth-century Italian painting technique" in *Historical Painting Techniques, Materials, and Studio Practice* (Preprints of a Symposium, University of Leiden, The Netherlands, June 26–29, 1995). Los Angeles, CA: Getty Conservation Institute, 1995, pp. 12–19.
14. This appears to have happened to the recently discovered painting by Caravaggio, *The Taking of Christ*, now in the National Gallery, Dublin.
15. See Marilyn Perry, "The Kress Collection" in Chiyo Ishikawa et al. (eds.), *A Gift to America: Masterpieces of European Painting from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994, pp. 13–35.
16. Marie Vassiltchikov, *Berlin Diaries, 1940–1945*. New York: Vintage Books, 1988, p. 184. "I had to leave a message at the Adlon and in the hall ran into Giorgio Cini. He has come to Berlin to try and bribe the S.S. into setting his father, old Count Cini, free. When Italy changed sides last year, the latter (a one-time Minister of Finances of Mussolini) was arrested and has been in Dachau concentration camp, in an underground cell, for the past eight months. He suffers from angina pectoris and is in very bad shape. The Cinis have millions and Giorgio is willing to pay anything to get him out. He himself has changed a lot since I last saw him just before the war. He evidently is desperately worried. He adores his father and for many months did not know his whereabouts, nor whether he still lived. Now he was waiting for some big Gestapo man. Who knows? With that amount of determination and will power—and money—he may succeed. He wants them to agree to transfer his father to an S.S. hospital and from there to Italy."
17. Memorandum to RHK from GE, November 24, 1952, Kress Foundation Archives.
18. See: Sarah Fisher, "Talens Rembrandt Picture Varnish" in Sarah Fisher et al. (eds.), *Painting Conservation Catalogue, Vol. 1: Varnishes and Surface Coatings*. Washington, D.C.: AIC, 1998, pp. 99–107.
19. Gustav Berger, "Inpainting using AYAB medium," *Cleaning Retouching and Coating, IIC Brussels Congress, September 3–7, 1990*, pp. 150–55.
20. *The Assumption and Coronation of the Immaculately Conceived Virgin* by the Master of the Saint Lucy Legend and Assistants, K-1689.
21. See: Edgar Peters Bowron, "The Kress brothers and their bucolic pictures" in Ishikawa et al. 1994 (cited in note 15).

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

Figs. 7 and 8, p. 53. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Samuel H. Kress Collection (1939.1.214).



Technical Studies & Treatment

Madonna and Child with Four Saints

Goodhart Ducciesque Master, 1310–20

Egg tempera on cradled wood panel

Central panel 30 × 19 1/2 in. (76.2 × 49.5 cm);

side panels, each 24 1/8 × 13 5/8 in. (61.3 × 34.6 cm)

Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama

61.104 (K-592)



FIG. 1. *Madonna and Child with Four Saints*, before cleaning and restoration.



FIG. 2. *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* (fig. 1), after cleaning and restoration.

A New Leaf: Recent Technical Discoveries in the Goodhart Ducciesque Master's *Madonna and Child with Four Saints*

Jennifer Sherman

THIS STUDY FOCUSES ON A Trecento five-panel polyptych, *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* by the Goodhart Ducciesque Master, an accomplished follower of the Trecento Sienese artist Duccio, whose unique hand has been recognized in a small corpus of works (figs. 1 and 2). Technical study of this altarpiece from the collection of the Birmingham Museum of Art enabled us to learn new information about its original appearance, the decorative gilding materials and techniques utilized, and to discover more about its conservation history.

Richard Offner identified this anonymous Sienese master and named him for a *Madonna and Child* then in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. A.E. Goodhart of New York.¹ That panel, bequeathed to Robert Lehman, became a part of Lehman's bequest to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1975.1.24). The Goodhart Master was active from around 1310 to 1330. This painter has not been linked directly through any specific evidence to Duccio or his workshop, but judging from stylistic and iconographic considerations, his work is strongly influenced by the precedents established by the great Sienese master. Other important Sienese artists who influenced him are cited in the literature on the Goodhart Master and include Ugolino da Siena, Segna Bonaventura, and Simone Martini.² It would appear that the Goodhart Master worked in and around Siena, and was commissioned to provide paintings for some of its provincial environs.³ From the limited number of extant works attributed to this artist, it is clear that he excelled when working on a small scale; most of

his surviving paintings are panels from diptychs or other small portable devotional objects. The Goodhart Master delighted in the finer details of these miniature paintings, and there is a tender reverence and naturalistic charm that comes across in the smaller scale that is somewhat lacking in his larger works. The Birmingham altarpiece is the largest commission convincingly attributed to the Goodhart Master.⁴ Although there are many charming elements in the Birmingham polyptych, as well as some extraordinary details, there is a general stiffness in the figures in the larger scale that is absent in his more diminutive paintings. Despite this minor shortcoming, the Birmingham altarpiece is regarded as one of the most accomplished (as well as ambitious) examples of the Goodhart Master's production.

The known provenance of the polyptych is rather scant and relatively recent. F. Mason Perkins notes that it had "long remained, comparatively unheeded, in the seclusion of an ancient Tuscan villa."⁵ Samuel H. Kress acquired the altarpiece in 1941 from Count Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi in Florence, and in 1952 the Kress Foundation gave it to the Birmingham Museum of Art in Alabama.

The altarpiece is comprised of five panels with semicircular arched tops. The central panel depicting a half-length Madonna and Child is taller and wider than the four flanking panels. This format, which may have included triangular gables above each panel, was established in the first decade of the Trecento.⁶ From left to right, the side panels represent an unidentified bishop saint, Saint John the Baptist, the Archangel Michael, and a saint tentatively identified as Dionysius the Areopagite. The frame dates to the twentieth century.

Each of the five panels was made from a single plank, presumably of poplar; no joins are evident in any of the panels. Numerous irregularities in the wood grain of the panels have resulted in chronic flaking of the gesso and paint layers in localized areas. Thin wood strips have been applied all around each panel, obscuring the original edges. The panels were thinned and cradled sometime

around 1941,⁷ so no technical information can be gleaned by examining the backs. However, there are X-radiographs in the Kress Archives that were taken prior to the thinning and cradling.⁸ The report notes that "plaster" had been applied to the backs of all the panels, and that the X-radiographs reveal more about the plaster than the planks themselves. It is clear that the *Madonna and Child* panel had suffered from considerable worm tunneling, and the damage subsequently filled with this "plaster." Dowel holes used to align the panels are evident in the early "shadowgraphs," linking the bishop saint to Saint John, and the Archangel Michael to Dionysius, confirming the correct sequence of the panels. Although dowel holes are evident in the adjacent sides of the two saints flanking the Madonna, no dowel holes can be seen in the "shadowgraph" of the Madonna panel. X-radiographs taken by the author in 1994 (well after the panels had been thinned) do not reveal any evidence of the doweling. A faint pattern discernible in the recent X-radiographs confirms that all of the panels were covered with fabric prior to application of the ground layer.

The gesso preparation is fairly thick, as is typical for tempera panels of the period. In the X-radiographs it is clear the panels had many knots and other irregularities in the wood grain which were subsequently filled with gesso to provide a smooth surface. In spite of this preparation, some areas remained problematic, and gesso and paint losses (subsequently filled) and several consolidation campaigns were evident in these locations.

The backgrounds of the panels were water gilded, and the haloes of the saints were punched and tooled. Although the thick, discolored varnish obscured the gold grounds to some degree, it was apparent that some of the cracks in the gesso beneath the leaf were quite old, and that many of these cracks extended into the original paint layer and were, thus, original. Numerous localized campaigns of repair and regilding of the plain gold backgrounds were evident (fig. 3). The areas of regilding are particularly obvious at the joins where the wood strips had been added to the edges of the panels. The punched and tooled



FIG. 3. *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* (fig. 1), Bishop Saint, detail of gold ground and tooled halo, before restoration.



FIG. 4. *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* (fig. 1), detail of Madonna's and Christ Child's heads with surrounding gilding, after cleaning.

haloes appeared to be in remarkably good condition, the tooling crisp and well preserved, with only a few minor exceptions. In some areas within the haloes the gilding was a bit abraded, exposing the underlying red bole.

The egg tempera paint layer was built up in the traditional manner of the period. Local areas of color were applied in thin layers consisting of fine, hatched strokes. In general, each area of color was kept fairly pure, with variations in modeling for the lighter tones being achieved by the addition of lead white to the local color, and shadow by either the absence of white and/or with deeper, transparent glazes of local color. A green *verdaccio* was applied as a base color for the flesh tones. The flesh tones applied on top of the *verdaccio* are a mixture of yellow ochre, vermilion and lead white. The brushwork is delicate and fine, and the transitions between dark and light are soft and smoothly rendered.

With the exception of some areas of localized loss, the paint layers of the five panels are in a remarkably good state. The subtle modeling of the flesh tones has survived almost intact with little abrasion. In addition, some of the finest brushwork, such as the delicate whiskers of Dionysius's beard, remain beautifully preserved and are a testament to the Goodhart Master's refined sensibility, as well as his miniaturistic predilections.

Despite the overall good state, there is consistent paint loss along the contours of the painted image where the paint had been applied on top of the metallic ground. A later, clumsy restoration extended beyond the original contours and over the edges of the metal leaf ground, enlarging the silhouette of each figure (fig. 4). Another significant type of paint loss corresponds to irregularities in the poplar planks, evident both as linear losses related to irregular wood grain and larger, broader losses related to knots. A third type of paint/ground loss is noted in patches along the bottom of each panel; these appear to be from some sort of water damage.

There was much decorative gilding applied to the painted draperies and attributes of the saints,

some consisting of a yellow metal leaf, some of a white metal leaf, and some appearing to be a combination (perhaps an alloy) of yellow and white metal leaf. We observed that some of the brighter yellow and white metallic mordant leaf gilding appeared to be a later restoration. These additions were found on the medallion and border of the bishop saint's cope (fig. 5), as well as his miter, and on the archangel's sword and brooch (figs. 6 and 7). All of these overgilded areas had a distinctive thickness and texture as well as a slightly gaudier appearance that distinguished them from the more subtle original mordant gilding. (For comparison, note the border of the bishop saint's mantle along the right edge of the panel. This is the only remaining area of the original unrestored mordant gilding on this panel.) The handling is less refined in these areas of overgilding, and there is a rather crude attempt at incising pattern into the leaf in the restored areas that is not observed on the original mordant gilding. This campaign of restoration is distinguished

from a later stage of restoration in which shell gold (powdered gold in an aqueous medium) is used in lieu of metal leaf. Shell gold is obvious in these passages, as the individual particles of the ground gold are visible under the microscope. The areas from this more recent campaign include the star on the mantle of the Madonna's proper right shoulder, the cuff of her sleeve and the top of the mantle's border directly above it, as well as on some abraded areas of the lining of her mantle below her neck. The gold quatrefoils of the bishop saint's cope were also reinforced with shell gold.

Originally the decorative leaf consisted of a mordant gilt metal leaf with a tone somewhere between gold and silver, and toned or glazed with translucent pigments to enrich its effect (fig. 8). A sample of this leaf was analyzed with scanning electron microscopy—energy dispersive spectrometry (SEM/EDS).⁹ The results confirmed that the material contained both gold and silver, with a proportionately higher amount of silver. Examination by SEM revealed that the leaf was a



FIG. 5. *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* (fig. 1), detail of later restoration of incised and glazed mordant gilding on the clasp on the bishop saint's cope; note the use of white metal leaf.

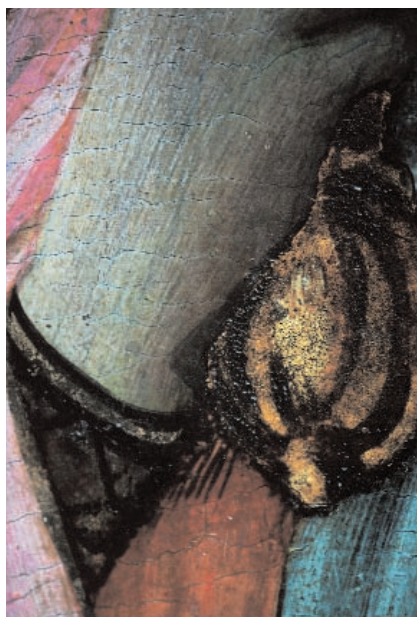


FIG. 6. *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* (fig. 1), detail of the archangel's hand holding sword; compare the original mordant gilding on the cuff with the clumsy, thick regilding on the sword handle; note also the pentimento left from the tarnished *zwischen*gold on the archangel's hand.



FIG. 7. *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* (fig. 1), detail of the archangel's proper right hand with crude regilding of sword elements; note the use of a white metal for the sword blade and yellow gold for the hilt.



FIG. 8. *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* (fig. 1), detail of well-preserved *zwischen*gold from the archangel's diadem.

laminate comprised of a thicker silver substrate, upon which a very thin layer of gold had been applied. This material is what was commonly referred to in Northern artists' treatises as *zwischen*gold, or, in Italy as *oro di metà* (fig. 9). This laminate leaf is distinctive in its appearance, being neither bright gold, nor cool silver, but a rich, understated bronzy tone. It should be noted, however, that the tarnishing of the silver component undoubtedly has contributed to the overall darkening of this leaf; when newly applied, the *oro di metà* would have been closer in appearance to gold leaf.

Traditionally, *oro di metà* was used as an economical alternative to gold leaf.¹⁰ It is mentioned in treatises in three basic forms: one using thin gold leaf hammered into the silver substrate; another in which a mordant of some sort was used to bind the two layers together; and a third that uses a mordant between the two layers, which are then hammered together. The terms *zwischen*gold or *oro di metà* appear to be used interchangeably to describe any of these techniques. It was not determined which method was used for the *oro di metà* on the Goodhart Master polyptych.

Each of the panels has a gold ground, with a tooled halo decorated with a simple circular punch. The gold grounds have undergone numerous campaigns of repair and regilding. The many repairs and patches are easily identified by their different metallic sheens and in some cases colors,

as well as by the interruptions of the old craquelure where losses to the gesso had been filled. In many areas the gilding lying over the old gesso cracks appears to have been patched with an additional layer of gold leaf, perhaps at a later time, with characteristic streaks left by the burnisher as the leaf was rubbed over an already-compressed gesso preparation.

The gilded and tooled haloes, demonstrating typical Trecento Siense craftsmanship and design, appeared to be in a remarkably good state in comparison to the general condition of the gold grounds. Clearly there were some minor repairs and abrasion in the haloes, but overall, they appeared to be beautifully preserved, with crisp definition in the incised patterns.

Microscopic examination of the gold grounds of all five panels revealed several minute metal leaf fragments that appeared to be silver. Most were located along contours of the painted images. Some were completely blackened, and others had the brownish cast of partially tarnished silver (silver sulfide) (fig. 10). When scratched, white



FIG. 9. *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* (fig. 1), cross-section (200×) of *zwischen*gold from the decorated border of the Madonna's mantle.



FIG. 10. *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* (fig. 1), cross-section (200×) from central panel showing the silver ground along the left edge of the mantle below the shoulder; note the restored gold layer directly on top of silver leaf.

metal leaf was exposed on these fragments. We wondered whether these whitish metallic fragments noted throughout each panel were stray bits of some of the decorative gilding from the garments and attributes of the saints, or whether, at some point, the panels could have had a white metal background. During cleaning more silvery fragments were noted (fig. 11), especially along the contours of the figures, underneath old restoration. Further examination with the stereobinocular microscope enabled us to find more silver fragments hidden beneath old restoration and gilded repairs. Elemental analysis (SEM/EDS) of a few samples located in representative areas confirmed that these fragments were indeed silver.¹¹ It gradually became evident that the “gold grounds” that we now see had originally been silver.



FIG. 11. *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* (fig. 1), detail of blackened silver fragments from silver ground after cleaning (from bottom left corner of Saint John the Baptist).

If silver grounds were part of the artist's original conception, the polyptych takes on a whole new aspect. It seems to me that the artist's palette was clearly designed to complement the cooler, more subtle silver background. If we envision the altarpiece with a more subdued silver ground, rather than the brighter, brassier yellow-gold ground, combined with the rich, subtle contrast in metallic tone with the mordant-gilt *zwischen*gold decorative elements, we can appreciate what a brilliant colorist the Goodhart Master was (fig. 12). The cool silver ground set against the rich interplays of gradations of warm and cool tempera color, coupled with the subtle subdued tones of the *oro di metà* must have created a stunningly harmonious and sublime effect. And what a glorious impression the whole ensemble would have made when it first left the artist's studio, before oxidation began to alter the tone of the silver.

Silver leaf is mentioned in medieval artists' treatises, but usually with a caveat about the tarnishing and blackening of silver that inevitably spoils the splendid effect of the painting set against a precious metal background. While silver grounds for panel paintings are known to exist, they are somewhat rare (see Appendix). However, silver leaf is frequently used in Sienese painting for decorative purposes on spandrels and framing elements, as well as for specific details within the painted composition. The incorporation of combinations of precious metals, often glazed with translucent pigments to simulate enamel or to create other effects, is an important feature of Sienese painting. The aesthetic of the Sienese School is characterized by elegance, sinuous line, jewel-like color, rich patterning, and skillful manipulation of precious materials.

There are several reasons why silver-ground paintings are rarely encountered: first, the tarnishing of the silver detracts from the magnificent effect of the painting against a precious metal ground. It is important to note, however, that more silver-ground paintings may have been created than the small number remaining extant would lead us to believe. Easily darkened, even disfigured, by exposure to sulfur in the atmosphere,



FIG. 12. *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* (fig. 1), digitally re-colored with silver ground.

silver grounds most probably would have been rubbed down and gilded with the non-tarnishing yellow gold leaf. The second reason is that gold is a more precious metal and thus regarded as a more suitable material for use in sacred works. Inherent in the preciousness of gold is its cost, so commissions of a more humble economic origin often stipulate the use of silver as an alternative to the more costly gold leaf. However, at any time after the altarpiece was finished, a parish might have raised funds to replace the tarnished silver ground with the more precious gold. Finally, in the early twentieth century, when collecting Italian primitives became fashionable, dealers routinely replaced or camouflaged the damaged silver and gold backgrounds, sometimes with paint, but usually with gold, often clumsily applied.

After considering that these panels originally had silver grounds, we were forced to confront the issue of the “remarkably well-preserved” punched and tooled haloes, executed in gold leaf. While the punched and tooled haloes appeared to be well preserved and their motifs stylistically in keeping with other Sienese works of the period, we were unable to explain why the tiny crack pattern in the original gesso, present in the rest of the background, disappeared in the areas circumscribed by the incised outline. The transition

between the background and the haloes was seamless and the tooling had clearly been done after the gold leaf had been applied and burnished. The absence of cracks in the gesso within the contours of the haloes made them suspect. Ultimately, after much examination under the binocular microscope and consultation with Mario Modestini, we postulated that, in the areas of the haloes, the original gesso had been carved out and replaced with a fresh preparation that would allow the gold to be burnished and tooled. This new gesso was made perfectly level with the rest of the background and then, over this hybrid ground, new bole and leaf were applied. After burnishing, the new haloes were incised and punched in the manner of a Ducciesque Trecento artisan; the leaf applied to the freshly gessoed preparation took on an even, mirror-like burnish, unlike the surrounding gilded areas which were streaky. The restorer might have copied the original haloes although there are numerous contemporary examples that might have served as patterns.

The question still remained as to how the oldest cracks in the background, which continued into the paint layer and seemed to be in the gesso preparation, would still be present if the original silver grounds had been subsequently gilded with yellow gold. After studying the yellow gold

grounds of each panel it appeared that the present gold leaf was applied to the original gesso and successfully burnished in a masterful, if inexplicable, way. The jagged edges of the contours of the figures bore witness to the removal by scraping of the tarnished silver and underlying bole. Gradually we formed a hypothesis to account for the technical evidence: the original gesso grounds, after the silver and bole had been scraped off, had been smoothed down, followed possibly by the application of a thin layer of new gesso and bole before regilding. After drying, the underlying craquelure reasserted itself. The burnisher, as noted earlier, had left streaky marks because the underlying gesso preparation had already been compacted by the burnishing of the original silver ground. These marks were noted in all areas where the gesso appeared to be original.

The procedure described above to create a new gold background is extremely difficult to execute with convincing results because even the slightest surface variation is magnified during the gilding process. It would take an extremely skilled technician to accomplish such a feat and we tried to understand when and where this skillfully deceptive regilding had been done. A number of gifted and knowledgeable restorers and artisans working in Italy toward the end of the nineteenth century and into the first half of the twentieth had great success replicating early Italian painting and gilding techniques for use in restoration and in the creation of complete paintings “in the antique style.” The most famous of this group is Icilio Federico Ioni (also spelled Joni).

Ioni, who was born in Siena in 1866 and lived there for his entire life, first learned gilding and painting techniques at the hand of his uncle, Giovacchino Corsi, whose important workshop in Siena produced antique-style frames, tabernacles and other decorative works. Ioni quickly mastered gilding techniques, and his precocious drawing talents soon led him to study tempera painting technique. These skills enabled him to produce copies of paintings from the Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena, as well as concoctions for the art market. His mastery and knowledge of



FIG. 13. *Virgin and Child*, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, late 1330s–early 1340s, tempera on wood panel, $29\frac{3}{4} \times 17\frac{7}{8}$ in. (75.5 × 45.4 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA. In its present state.



FIG. 14. *Virgin and Child* (fig. 13), as restored by Icilio Federico Ioni.

traditional painting techniques attracted the attention of many prominent collectors, scholars, and dealers specializing in early Italian painting. In his autobiography, Ioni describes numerous examples of battered early Italian paintings he was commissioned to restore. Along with the legitimate restorations, many of his “antique-style” paintings ended up on the international art market. During the last half of the twentieth century, Ioni’s paintings were identified in collections of many prominent museums in Europe and the United States.

Some of Ioni’s activities have been identified with individual paintings, forgeries, and so-called *quadri antichi*. Both Frinta and Skaug have connected several paintings with Ioni, based on evidence found through examination of the punchwork. Kanter, Pope-Hennessy and Mazzoni have documented numerous examples of Ioni’s production, both original works in the “antique style” and restorations.

The Boston Museum of Fine Arts’ *Virgin and Child* by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (39.536) was restored by Ioni (fig. 13). Kanter states that photographs of the painting after its early nineteenth-century restoration document its state prior to Ioni’s restoration, and he published a photograph of the painting after Ioni’s restoration when it was acquired by Daniel Platt (fig. 14).¹² The photographs make it possible to compare the various states of the painting and to gain an understanding of Ioni’s approach toward restoration and to appreciate his considerable skill. In the nineteenth century this picture had a rectangular contour and punched borders in its regilt ground.¹³ Ioni removed the old retouching and regilding and altered the shape of the panel by adding a curiously conceived steep gable set within a pointed arch. He then regessoed and regilded the background, leaving the original punched and tooled haloes intact, and added an elaborate foliate incised design in the narrow areas between the outside of the steep gable and the created contour of the panel. The paint layer was restored with a fairly liberal hand, reinforcing the facial features of the figures with a linear emphasis. From this

example, we can see that Ioni freely altered dimensions and shapes of paintings so that they would appear less like fragments of a mutilated altarpiece and more like whole works in their own right. He was confident enough of his own skill to remove all of the regilding surrounding the tooled haloes and regesso and regild right up to the edges of the original *nimbi*, with extremely successful and convincing results.

Ioni’s hand has been identified in the restoration of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s poorly preserved Blumenthal *Madonna and Child*, given to Ambrogio Lorenzetti (41.190.26) (fig. 15). In this case only a fragment of the original punched and



FIG. 15. *Madonna and Child*, Ambrogio Lorenzetti (the Blumenthal Madonna), tempera on wood panel, 37 × 22 1/8 in. (94 × 56.2 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.

tooled haloes survives, located between the heads of the two figures. The rest of the gold ground has been entirely regessoed and regilded. Here again, we see how Ioni's bravado in applying new gesso and leaf up to the fragmentary remains of old tooled gilding met with considerable success. Ioni provided the "missing" tooled decoration on the rest of the haloes and borders in a manner consistent with other examples of Ambrogio's production. In the case of the punch noted in the restored portion of the Christ Child's halo, Ioni actually recreated a punch design based on the Ambrogio *Madonna and Child* from the Pinacoteca Nazionale in Siena (no. 605).¹⁴



FIG. 16. *Madonna and Child with Two Angels, Saint Francis, and Saint Louis of Toulouse*, Paolo di Giovanni Fei, ca. 1375, tempera and silver gilding on cradled wood panel, 70¹/₈ × 50⁵/₈ in. (178.2 × 128.6 cm). High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA.

Another example of Ioni's restoration work can be found in the *Madonna and Child with Two Angels, Saint Francis, and Saint Louis of Toulouse* by Paolo di Giovanni Fei in the collection of the High Museum in Atlanta (fig. 16). The halo of the angel on the left was restored. Frinta claims that the design of the modern punch used to form the "formal cluster" in the restored halo is based on the design of the original punch used in the better-preserved areas of tooled gilding from the same painting. He identified this particular punch in several paintings documented as having been restored by Ioni, concluding that Ioni restored the Atlanta painting. In this panel, it is evident that Ioni has gone to the effort of manufacturing a tool that imitates the surviving distinctive original punchwork, a telling indication of his skill and initiative.

After examining some of the work known to have been executed or extensively restored by Ioni, it is not unreasonable to suggest that he, or someone in his circle of talented artisans, could have restored the gold-ground haloes of the Birmingham altarpiece. Mario Modestini, who visited Ioni in his studio and saw many of his productions first-hand, holds the opinion that the tooled haloes may, indeed, have been executed by this clever restorer and artist.¹⁵ Coming across the anomalous "clues" during the early phase of treatment forced us to stop periodically and hypothesize about what the significance of these bits of evidence might be. Ultimately we came to understand that the color of the gilded background of the polyptych had been radically changed, and that the haloes were masterfully regilded, punched and incised, sometime in the early twentieth century by a bold and skillful restorer. These conclusions added a fascinating and unexpected dimension to the restoration of this altarpiece. It is hoped that future discoveries of this type—finding evidence of silver grounds, or examples of individual restorers making significant changes to a work of art—will be published and shared with the conservation community.

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NOTES

1. The name was coined by R. Offner, the first scholar to isolate and identify paintings by this Sieneese master (see Wehle 1940, p. 71).
2. For a review of literature on the Goodhart Ducciesque Master and works attributed to him, see Zeri (1980), Kanter (1994), Coor-Achenbach (1955), Shapley (1966), Pope-Hennessy (1987) and Stubblebine (1979).
3. Stubblebine (1979), Vol. 1, p. 106.
4. The altarpiece at Monterogriffoli has been given to the Goodhart Master by Coor-Achenbach (1955), pp. 163–4 and Stubblebine (1979), pp. 109–10. Suida (1959, p. 11) also cites this polyptych. Kanter (1994, p. 81) convincingly argues that although there are similarities between the Birmingham and Monterogriffoli altarpieces, the latter is “clearly dependent in style on the Goodhart Ducciesque Master.”
5. (Undated) manuscript opinion of Perkins on reverse of photograph of κ-592, Kress Foundation Archives.
6. See, for example, Duccio's Polyptych No. 28, Siena Pinacoteca Nazionale. Maginnis (2001), p. 104.
7. Condition and Restoration Record, κ-592, Kress Foundation Archives.
8. X-ray “shadowgraphs” and report, Alan Burroughs n.d., κ-592, *ibid.*
9. My thanks to Christopher McGlinchey, now scientist at the Museum of Modern Art and to Mark Wypyski of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, both of whom were at the Metropolitan when they assisted in carrying out the analysis.
10. Skaug (1994), Vol. 1, p. 57, and Theophilus (1979), p. 156.
11. My thanks, again, to Mark Wypyski and Christopher McGlinchey for the analysis carried out at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
12. Kanter (1994), p. 90.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
14. Frinta (1978), pp. 7–10.
15. Personal communications with M. Modestini throughout the course of treatment of the polyptych.

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APPENDIX: PANEL PAINTINGS WITH SILVER GROUNDS

This list is hardly exhaustive, and it would be worthwhile to identify other examples in an attempt to understand whether in some cases the motive for using silver instead of gold was aesthetic rather than purely economical as is usually supposed. Future technical study and conservation treatments of gold-ground panels may bring to light more pictures that originally bore silver grounds.

- Goodhart Ducciesque Master, *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* (κ-592), Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, Alabama (61.104). See Shapley (1966), p. 18.
- Master of the Grosseto Madonna, *Madonna and Child with Saint Peter and Saint John the Baptist* (κ-577), Museo de Arte de Ponce, Ponce, Puerto Rico (62.0255). See Shapley (1966), p. 15.
- Niccolò di Segna (?), *Young Male Saint*, art market, whereabouts unknown. Not seen by the author, but by Mario and Dianne Dwyer Modestini and, according to them, identified by Everett Fahy as one panel of a polyptych, part of which remains in Montalcino.
- Paolo di Giovanni Fei, *Madonna and Child with Two Angels, Saint Francis, and Saint Louis of Toulouse* (κ-187), High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA (58.42). See fig. 16 of this paper.
- Pietro Lorenzetti, *Madonna and Child*, Pieve dei SS. Stefano e Degna, Castiglione d'Orcia (Siena). See *Mostra di Opere d'Arte Restaurate nelle Province di Siena e Grosseto*. Genoa: Sagep Editrice (1979), pp. 49–51.
- Bernardo Daddi, *The Nativity and the Annunciation to the Shepherds*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. See Kanter (1994), pp. 54–7.
- Florentine School (Giovanni Bonsi?), *Saint Onufrius*, Acton Collection, Villa La Pietra, Florence.
- Sano di Pietro, *Madonna and Child*, Acton Collection, Villa La Pietra, Florence.
- Workshop of Ugolino da Siena (Olena Master?), *Madonna and Child with St. Peter and St. John the Evangelist*, Olena, near Barberino in Chianti, San Pietro. See Stubblebine (1979), Vol. 1, p. 91.

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

- Figs. 1–12, pp. 64, 67, 68, 69, 70, and 71. Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL, Samuel H. Kress Collection (61.104).
- Figs. 13 and 14, p. 72. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, Charles Potter Kling Fund (39.536). Photograph ©2005 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
- Fig. 15, p. 73. ©The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, all rights reserved.
- Fig. 16, p. 74. High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA. Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation (58.42).



Nativity

Sandro Botticelli (Alessandro di Mariano Filipepi), ca. 1475

Mixed media on plaster transferred to cradled canvas

63 1/2 × 54 in. (161.3 × 137.2 cm)

Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, South Carolina

CMA 1954.29 (K-1410)



FIG. 1. *Nativity*, during 1994–95 conservation.



FIG. 2. *Nativity* (fig. 1), after cleaning and restoration.

Botticelli's *Nativity*

Charles R. Mack

IN 1943, RENAISSANCE ART HISTORIAN, R. Langton Douglas concluded his evaluation of this detached fresco of the *Nativity* (figs. 1 and 2), with these evocative words: "This picture has all the charm, all the gracefulness of Botticelli's style at this period. It is the recorded vision of a painter, a painter who was essentially a mystic, though not without a sensuous appreciation of the beauties of the present world. This lovely pastoral is the Christian counterpart of a spring-tide dream of Theocritus. We see the New Life springing up amongst the ruins of the Old Order, whilst Angels sing the *Adeste Fideles*."¹

Despite the poetic phrasings of Douglas, a true appreciation of the *Nativity*, a part of the Samuel H. Kress Collection of the Columbia Museum of Art in South Carolina, since 1954, has been complicated and hampered by a number of problems involving the history of its ownership, proper attribution, original location and function, and condition. One scholar apparently believed there to be two separate works and wrote of both in the same book.² Such confusion, actually, is not surprising considering the complicated story of its provenance.

PROVENANCE

A reconstruction of the history of the painting might begin with a tantalizingly brief statement, signed in Munich on October 28, 1927 by a certain Franco Steffanoni of Bergamo.³ In this document, Steffanoni stated that he had once transferred a painting called *The Holy Nativity* from wall to canvas.

Steffanoni went on to say that he had made his identification from a photograph that had been sent to him. He added that the dimensions of the fresco he had transferred were 160 × 140 cm. These dimensions correspond closely to those of the painting now in the Columbia Museum (161.3 × 137.2 cm or 63 1/2 × 54 in.), and the photograph sent to Steffanoni showed the Columbia *Nativity*. There is no doubt that the painting began its life as a mural and that it was later transferred to a canvas support.⁴ Unfortunately, Steffanoni's terse testimony provided no information as to when or where he had performed his task.

If Steffanoni's 1927 account is to be credited, it would mean that he removed and transferred the painting at least forty-two years earlier, since a reconstruction of the painting's provenance points to it having been in the collection of Sir William Neville Abdy (1844–1910) of the Elms, Newdigate, Dorking, England by 1885.⁵ In that year, Abdy lent the work to the Louvre for an exhibition to benefit the Franco-Prussian War orphans of Alsace-Lorraine. The exhibit was called *Exposition de Tableaux, Statues et Objets d'Art au Profit de L'Oeuvre des Orphelins d'Alsace-Lorraine; Salle des États au Louvre*.⁶ Listed as number 312 on page 89 of the exhibition catalogue, the *Nativity* bore an unsurprising attribution to Botticelli's pupil, Filippino Lippi. Eventually, this same painting was among works from the Abdy estate sold in London at Christie's on May 5, 1911 (lot 86).⁷ By then it had received its more customary association with the name of Sandro Botticelli.

At this point, there is a bit of chronological confusion since Museum file records indicate that the painting was exhibited at the Szépművészeti Museum in Budapest from 1909 to 1911. How and why it traveled from England to Hungary and back to London for the 1911 auction is unclear. In any case, the person who acquired the painting at Christie's was the well-known international art collector and dealer, Marzell von Nemeš.⁸

While in von Nemeš's hands, the *Nativity*, along with other works from his collection, was placed on public view from 1912 to 1913 at the Städtische Kunsthalle in Düsseldorf, Germany, and listed in

a special catalogue to that exhibition.⁹ During this time, the *Nativity* attracted scholarly attention and was discussed in several articles focusing on the von Nemeš Collection.¹⁰ On June 17, 1913, the painting was among a number of works von Nemeš put up for sale at the Manzi firm of Paris; as item number 4 in the catalogue, it failed to find a buyer.¹¹ Shortly thereafter, the *Nativity* passed through the hands of Parisian dealers Charles Sedelmeyer and Broux Gilbert, but remained the property of von Nemeš, who was, it would seem, attempting to dispose of the work with World War I looming.¹² The whereabouts of the *Nativity* during World War I is unclear, but as that conflict came to an end, the painting was included and illustrated in a multi-volume history of medieval and Renaissance painting written by Salomon Reinach.¹³ In 1921, von Nemeš acquired a castle, Schloss Tutzing, in Upper Bavaria and used it as a private gallery for his extensive collection. The *Nativity* was apparently still in von Nemeš's possession throughout the 1920s and may have spent the decade at Tutzing. It was during that period that Steffanoni was asked to document his involvement; evidently his testimony was part of an effort to authenticate the painting prior to an anticipated sale. At von Nemeš's death in 1930, however, the *Nativity* was still unsold and formed part of his estate.

When von Nemeš died, he was in debt to several banks that had come under the control of the German government and which now proceeded to seize and dispose of the collection. The German authorities made an unsuccessful effort to sell the *Nativity* at auction on February 29, 1932.¹⁴ This was a particularly difficult period in the German and world economy, and it is not surprising that a buyer could not be found. In connection with the 1932 auction (location undocumented but probably in Munich), the painting was examined by a certain "Professor Graf, Chief Conservator of the Pinakothek here" to evaluate its condition. It was Graf who left the first condition report for the *Nativity* (see discussion, below).¹⁵

Around 1935, German officials included the *Nativity* among the unsold works from the von

Nemeš estate that were placed in storage at the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin.¹⁶ This temporary connection has led, at times, to incorrect provenance entries that indicate that the painting was part of the Museum's collection.¹⁷

Finally, in 1937, the *Nativity* was removed from its Berlin deposit and taken to Munich, where, once again, it was put on auction, this time successfully, at the firm of Julius Boehler.¹⁸ The buyer was the famous English art dealer Lord Duveen of Millbank. Duveen, of course, was interested in a resale, and it was at his behest that in October of the same year the *Nativity* was fitted out with an elaborately carved and handsomely painted and gilded frame commissioned from an Italian craftsman named Ferruccio Vannoni at a cost of 2,500 lire.¹⁹ Vannoni would seem to have produced his frame in Italy, working from dimensions sent

to him. (For more on Vannoni, see Mario and Dianne Dwyer Modestini's paper in this volume.)

The *Nativity's* new owner supplied many works of art to Samuel H. Kress, and it was through Duveen that the *Nativity*, now rather securely bearing the name of Sandro Botticelli, came to the United States and eventually into the Kress Collection in 1946.²⁰ At that point, Kress was enhancing his donation to the National Gallery of Art, and the *Nativity* was placed on public view in Washington from 1946 until 1953. In 1954, after decades of wandering, the Abdy-von Nemeš-Kress *Nativity* found its permanent home in South Carolina when it joined twenty-six other paintings in an initial gift from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation to the newly established Columbia Museum of Art, then housed in the renovated Thomas Taylor Home (fig. 3).²¹ To better



FIG. 3. *Nativity* (fig. 1), in the Ferruccio Vannoni frame as installed in the Columbia Museum of Art (Taylor House location) in 1954.



FIG. 4. *Nativity* (fig. 1), 1962 reinstatement without the Vannoni frame.

approximate the *Nativity's* origin as a mural, Vannoni's elaborate frame was removed sometime in 1961 or 1962, and the painting was set into a wall of the gallery (fig. 4).

ATTRIBUTION

The fresco of the *Nativity* has been associated with the names of both Sandro Botticelli and his pupil, Filippino Lippi. Sadly, neither of the biographies of these two artists in Giorgio Vasari's mid-sixteenth-century *Lives of the Artists*, makes mention of the fresco—an understandable omission considering its relatively small size and its simplicity of statement. When the *Nativity* first entered the literature in 1885, it was ascribed to Filippino Lippi. Since then, however, scholars have united around the name of Sandro Botticelli, differing primarily in describing it as either autograph or a workshop production. Even those who give it to Botticelli have assigned portions of it (e.g., the three hovering angels) to an assistant, perhaps even Filippino Lippi. Opinions in the Kress Foundation files from Bernard Berenson (1932), Lionello Venturi (1939), R. Langton Douglas (1943), Fern Rusk Shapley (1966), B.B. Fredericksen and Federico Zeri (1972), and most recently from Everett Fahy (who saw the painting after its latest restoration in 1994) have supported a definite attribution to Botticelli, with Berenson revising his view in 1963 in favor of a more conservative workshop association, a position taken in 1931 by Raimond van Marle.²²

Several authorities have associated the *Nativity's* style and composition with two works that have been attributed to Botticelli or his circle. One of these is a pen and ink drawing, usually thought to be a school work, of three flying angels in the Gabinetto dei Disegni of the Uffizi.²³ There is a general resemblance between this group and the angels hovering above the stable in the *Nativity*, although the apparent similarity may be misleadingly enhanced by the drawing's semicircular shape that heightens its resemblance to the angels in Columbia. Whether the drawing was made as a lunette or was later cut down to that form is uncertain. Admittedly the fluidity of these

diaphanously clad angels bears greater similarity to the fresco in Columbia than it does to the angelic celebrants floating and dancing above Botticelli's late (circa 1501) *Mystic Nativity* in London with which the drawing has been associated, but an absolute connection cannot be made. The Uffizi drawing has been dated variously within the earlier to middle phases of Botticelli's career, i.e., from the early 1470s to as late as 1490.

The composition and stylistic features of the *Nativity* in Columbia are most often connected with a frescoed lunette of the same subject (but without the landscape setting and Florentine youths) in the church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence.²⁴ This fresco has been relocated within the church—perhaps more than once—and originally may have surmounted the famous *Adoration of the Magi* in the Del Lama funerary chapel.²⁵ This badly preserved fresco reverses the basic composition of the Columbia *Nativity* by placing the Madonna on the left and further differs from it by having the young Saint John rush in from the left rear and having Joseph seated in an attitude of slumber.²⁶ Dated between 1475 and 1477, it has been seen as a stylistic relative of the Columbia *Nativity*.

Based in part on its perceived similarities to the Santa Maria Novella *Nativity*, the Columbia fresco has usually been assigned a somewhat earlier date in Botticelli's chronology, around 1473 to 1475. To support this dating, R. Langton Douglas pointed to a stylistic affinity with the manner of Fra Filippo Lippi.²⁷ Douglas noted that, although Botticelli had received his first instruction in Lippi's shop, he had acquired a more sculptural approach through his later connection with the *bottega* of Andrea del Verrocchio. When Fra Filippo's son, the precocious Filippino, apprenticed with Botticelli in 1472, Botticelli was motivated to revive the manner of his old master. Douglas believed that the *Nativity* in Columbia is one manifestation of the lyrical Lippi revival within the evolving style of Sandro Botticelli.

THE QUESTION OF THE ORIGINAL LOCATION

As noted earlier, the first recorded mention of the *Nativity* placed it in the private collection of

William Abdy in 1885. Some four decades later, the Italian conservator Franco Steffanoni attested to having removed the fresco from what we can assume was its original location and having transferred it to a canvas support (making possible all its subsequent international travels and its eventual arrival in South Carolina). But where had Steffanoni done his work and what, in the first place, had occasioned the transfer from wall to canvas, from a fixed to a mobile condition? The answers to these questions would not only satisfy simple curiosity but would assist in resolving problems of its purpose and attribution.

A search through the old accounts and histories of Florentine art, including Giorgio Vasari's *Lives* (looking under the various possible artists to whom the painting might be attributed—Botticelli, Filippino Lippi, Botticini, etc.) has not produced any record of this *Nativity* prior to 1885. The questions remain. For what purpose could such a fresco with its comparatively small dimensions and with such a subject have been originally commissioned? The subject matter is a common one for an altarpiece, yet frescoes are not generally associated with that particular form. On the other hand, altarpieces in fresco may have been more common than is supposed, with many having been destroyed (not being easily movable) during modernization campaigns or, as in the case with our *Nativity*, converted to a transportable and salable state. One famous example of an altarpiece in fresco, albeit of uncommon type and with a totally different subject, is the celebrated Masaccio *Trinity* from the mid-1420s, above a memorial altar in the Florentine church of Santa Maria Novella. The Botticelli *Nativity* discussed earlier, still in the same church but in a new location, is another possible example. Still another and more obvious example—one with an identical theme and offering a parallel to the Columbia painting—can still be found in its original location in the church of Santa Maria del Popolo in Rome. There, between 1485 and 1489, Pinturicchio painted a fresco of the *Nativity* above the altar of the Cappella della Rovere and framed it in such a way that it appears as if it were a normal panel

painting. That intact setting provides a visual key to understanding one context for the *Nativity* in Columbia and how it might be better appreciated today. But even if this hypothesis were true, where were the church and the chapel in which the *Nativity* served as an altarpiece?

Given the clearly Florentine character of the *Nativity*, Florence would be the logical assumption, although no record of such an altarpiece has been preserved. One possible clue, however, is offered by the suggested date for Steffanoni's removal of the fresco and for its appearance in the Abdy Collection at some point prior to 1885. It was just at that time that the city of Florence was initiating a drastic program of urban renewal that would obliterate almost its entire central core.²⁸ In the campaign to modernize the city, much of the medieval and Renaissance district around the old market square was razed to be replaced by the neo-classical Piazza della Repubblica, the central post office, and other structures of the late nineteenth century. Perhaps, the Columbia Museum's *Nativity* was frescoed on the wall of one of the several churches sacrificed to that massive rebuilding campaign.²⁹ Something, but certainly not everything, is known of these churches' architectural character and furnishings. It is just possible that the *Nativity* was salvaged from a church sacrificed to this lamentable nineteenth-century modernization of the heart of old Florence, first rescued and then sold to an English collector.

Of course, there is no proof that the *Nativity* had a Florentine origin at all. Both Botticelli and Filippino Lippi, the two artists with whom the fresco has been most commonly associated, also worked in Rome. Botticelli was there from 1481 to 1482, when he worked on the frescoes lining the walls of the Sistine Chapel. The young Filippino Lippi was in Rome from 1488 to 1493 while he was executing the frescoes in the splendid chapel of Cardinal Olivieri Carafa in the church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva. Either artist could have accepted a small side commission to paint a *Nativity* on the wall of some Roman church. On the other hand, there is no more evidence for such an altarpiece in Rome than there is in Florence,



FIG. 5. *Nativity* (fig. 1), showing the condition of the fresco following its transfer to canvas and prior to the first series of restorations.

and stylistically the *Nativity* would seem too early to support a Roman hypothesis for either artist.

If an original location and function as an altar-piece within a church cannot be substantiated, what of some external site? The street corners of Florence, even today, abound with outdoor tabernacles.³⁰ Some 1,300 are known to have existed. Over the years many of these have disappeared for a multitude of reasons from floods to street repair to urban renewal. Certainly a number vanished with the demolition of the old market quarter just mentioned. Most of these street-side shrines featured images in fresco. While most of these, judging by the survivors, are considerably smaller in size and less compositionally complex than the Columbia *Nativity*, some larger examples survive, and this suggests another possible origin for the *Nativity*. In support of this “open air” hypothesis is a file photograph of the fresco; although undated, it must have been taken at some point before the *Nativity* entered the Kress Collection (fig. 5).³¹ In this photograph the surface shows

considerable wear of the type one might expect to find in a work exposed to the elements.

It is more than likely that the *Nativity*, whatever its original site or function, received the attention of informal cleanings and even minor restorations long before Steffanoni entered the scene. His interventions were, however, radical in nature. Thankfully, his approach to the problem of mural detachment appears to have been competent. After it had been transferred to heavy canvas (primed on the reverse and reinforced with a lightweight cradle) and had passed from the Abdy to the von Nemeš Collection, the *Nativity* apparently underwent an energetic restoration, by whom we do not know.

When Professor Graf, the chief conservator of the Munich Alte Pinakothek, examined the painting in 1932 he presented a brief but contradictory report.³² He stated that the *Nativity* “has been very well preserved,” but that “the restorations which have been made by Von Nemeš are to be regretted.” Graf went on to note that while a “moderate and orderly restoration” might be undertaken, his conclusion was that “after close scrutiny and experienced consideration, no further restoration should be attempted.” If anything were to be done, he recommended nothing more than “touching up the white places with light coloring, in order to make it more attractive to the eye of the spectator.” If this were done, Graf suggested “photographing the picture in its present state, in order to show to the eventual buyer the exact state of the picture, the parts that have been repainted, and those which have been restored.”

Until recently, conservation records for the *Nativity* have been meager. In addition to Steffanoni’s treatment of the painting after its transfer to canvas, the more aggressive treatment probably done for von Nemeš, and the possible work performed under Graf’s direction, an undated Columbia Museum of Art condition report mentions, without elaboration, minor restorations in 1947 and in 1954, that is subsequent to the *Nativity*’s acquisition by Samuel H. Kress and then in preparation for sending it to Columbia.



FIG. 6. *Nativity* (fig. 1), as presently installed in the new Columbia Museum of Art.

On June 14, 1993, the Columbia Museum of Art's catalogue sheet for the painting rated its condition as good to fair, adding the following comments:

chipping of paint has occurred along bottom and right side. There are many cracks where chips were lost. Also, there are some areas where the top layer of paint is missing. It looks as though work has been done to keep further deterioration from occurring.

In March 1994, Kress Foundation conservator Dianne Dwyer Modestini visited the Columbia Museum of Art to examine the overall condition of its collection and to recommend a program of regular maintenance and restoration. Her report reviewed the condition of the *Nativity* and suggested that it be removed to her conservation studio in New York for appropriate attention to begin that September. In this initial report, Dianne Dwyer Modestini theorized that the major work of restoration on the fresco had been done at the beginning of the twentieth century, an observation that agreed with Graf's notes in 1932. She went on to observe that:

The condition is uneven with some passages well preserved and others in ruinous state. The three angels above are largely reconstructed from existing fragments which can be glimpsed here and there under crude repaint. The architecture of the stable is relatively well preserved with only the beam immediately behind the angels completely repainted. These elements in the upper part of the painting could have been painted in *buon fresco*. The sky is repainted in full. Small fragments of the original blue can be located in a few places. The original blue is a thin wash of what appears to be lapis. The donkey is well preserved; the mouth of the ox, the neck, and the part of the head in shadow have been repainted. The distant landscape and the grove of trees on the left are well preserved. The two youths on the left are worn, especially the heads and hands, and the costumes have been much, but not completely, repainted. The foreground landscape is largely, but not completely, restoration. Some parts of the bushes, including the fruit,

are original; therefore the iconographical significance is valid. The figure of St. Joseph, the bundle in the foreground and the Madonna's head and hands are quite well preserved. Her dress, painted with good quality lapis blue, has lots of restorations but on the whole is in fair state. For the flesh tones, the paint has been applied as a liquid enamel over which thin modeling glazes have been floated. It exhibits a fine craquelure pattern which indicates that there is a binder, possibly a tempera *grassa*. The Child is in good state and the mordant gilding is original. Other areas of mordant gilding are reasonably intact, especially the little curlicues which rain down on the Child from the angelic trio. There has been some reinforcement with shell gold.

Modestini concluded her preliminary observations by suggesting that in a new round of conservation procedures after cleaning, the old inpainted restorations be removed, and that those areas suffering from the most damage be restored with neutral tones; these areas would include the three hovering angels and the foreground. Following her advice, and with the support of the Kress Foundation, the fresco was transported to New York where cleaning and restoration work was carried out by Mario and Dianne Dwyer Modestini. The *Nativity* was missed in Columbia but, as its absence coincided with preparations for reinstalling the Museum's collection in its handsome new quarters on Columbia's Main Street, this seemed the perfect occasion. Work on the *Nativity* was undertaken in the autumn of 1994, and the painting was back in Columbia, fitted out with a new tabernacle-like frame, ready to assume its pivotal position in the Museum's collection of Renaissance and Baroque art when the building was inaugurated in the summer of 1998 (fig. 6).

TREATMENT

The treatment at the New York University Conservation Center was summarized in a report sent to the Columbia Museum on January 5, 1995. In it, Dianne Dwyer Modestini explained the current state (see fig. 1) of the fresco and outlined the

steps and procedures taken to stabilize the work and optimize its appearance, first noting that:

Of course, the painting is not in good condition . . . important parts are well preserved: notably the head and hands of the Madonna, the figure of St. Joseph, the Child, and, somewhat less, the young St. John. The two figures on the left are badly damaged. Other details are well preserved, while the foreground and sky and the three hovering angels are in ruinous state. Of the angels, only the head of the angel on the right is in good condition. The landscape backgrounds, while full of scattered losses and abrasions, are, nonetheless, original, that is, not completely repainted, whereas the grove of trees on the left is largely reconstructed. The plants along the bottom are mostly reconstructed, with large areas of loss; however, there is some original.

Those who saw the painting during its period of convalescence in New York affirmed the primary authorship of Botticelli but suggested that there was a strong influence present from his apprentice, Filippino Lippi. In addition, “. . . we have noted,” Modestini wrote, “that there is a variation in quality, the principal parts being superbly drawn and painted, while other elements, such as the stable, the animals, seem to be by an inferior hand, a studio assistant.” In all probability, this lesser hand was not that of Filippino Lippi whose abilities matched those of his teacher.



FIG. 7. *Nativity* (fig. 1), detail of angels prior to 1994–95 conservation procedures.

Modestini also explained that, “The painting was transferred from plaster, lined to linen, which was then mounted on some sort of cradled board.” She determined that:

The technique is mixed media on plaster . . . not entirely *buon fresco*. Many passages, especially the flesh tones, exhibit a fine craquelure pattern associated with an aqueous binder, and are minutely executed like a tempera painting. The cracks and deformations of the original plaster support are evident throughout and the pattern of the cradle [of Steffanoni] can be seen in raking light. Structurally, the painting is stable.

Following a discussion of the particular procedures used in the restoration and of the various solvents and chemicals used in the cleaning and retouching processes, she concluded by saying that her:

restoration generally treated the painting as an easel painting, rather than a fresco for a variety of reasons: the poor state, the fact that it was not painted as a true fresco to begin with, and the treatment that it had undergone in the past which has been selectively removed.

RESULTS AND DISCOVERIES

What has been the effect of the recent cleaning and the conservation measures undertaken under the auspices of the Kress Foundation? The most



FIG. 8. *Nativity* (fig. 1), detail of angels following 1994–95 conservation procedures.

obvious result has been to stabilize its condition and to enhance its appearance (figs. 7 and 8). In addition, examination during treatment allowed for a more secure confirmation of Botticelli's primary role in its execution and an opportunity to distinguish between what is autograph and where Botticelli's contemporaries or later restorers have intervened.

The technical and stylistic understanding that the recent conservation measures brought to the *Nativity* have enabled us to re-evaluate Botticelli's working procedures. In 1978 Ronald Lightbown observed that:

the division between Botticelli's autograph works and the paintings from his workshop and circle is a fairly sharp one. Only in a single major panel painting (the *Trinity Altarpiece* in London's Courtauld Institute), do we find important parts executed by assistants . . . Even in the Sistine frescoes, where we might expect considerable traces of help from secondary hands, none has been convincingly demonstrated.³³

Lightbown also noted that "conversely, there are a very few workshop pictures in which Botticelli finished important parts or added finishing touches . . ." The close observation recently afforded the *Nativity* might necessitate a reconsideration of Lightbown's conclusions. At least in the case of the *Nativity* in Columbia, it has been shown that an essentially autograph fresco by Botticelli, even one of small dimensions, could involve the participation of one or more assistants in its execution.

Another result has been to reveal and clarify painted elements that allow for a more intelligent reading of the various visual meanings within the seemingly straightforward presentation. One such element, previously only barely visible, is the shower of golden flames (fig. 9) that fall upon the Christ Child from the trinity of angels hovering above. Such flaming bundles (resembling the badges worn by today's Carabinieri, the Italian national police) are to be found in other Botticelli compositions: they appear on the shoulder of Mary in the *Madonna of the Book* in the Museo Poldi Pezzoli in Milan, and they sprinkle across



FIG. 9. *Nativity* (fig. 1), detail showing "golden flames," following 1994–95 conservation procedures.

the drapery of Mercury in the famous *Primavera* in the Uffizi. Most telling is the use of this motif in several of the drawings the master executed to illustrate Dante's *Divine Comedy*. They are major pictorial elements in Botticelli's drawings for *Inferno* Cantos xxvi–xxviii and especially for *Paradiso* Cantos vi–viii and xxiii–xxvi. The literary context makes the meaning clear in these connections: they represent "spirits" or "souls." Thus, in the Columbia *Nativity*, the newly clarified golden flames falling upon the *Bambino* might be interpreted as a Heavenly descent of the Holy Spirit as God is made man,³⁴ a reminder of the Virgin Birth.

For the visitor to the Columbia Museum of Art and for those who will be using its anticipated catalogue of Renaissance and Baroque art,

this conservation effort will have a decided impact. Not only has the visual integrity of the *Nativity* fresco been strengthened, but the information we have learned will be used to clarify the presentation. It will now be possible, thanks to the careful art historical and scientific reading of the painting afforded by the Kress-sponsored restoration, to explain the areas of varying quality within the composition—why, for instance, the Virgin’s face can be so lovely while that of the ox is so poorly executed. Such aspects as how little of the angels’ original figures do in fact remain can also be pointed out, allowing for a more discriminating appraisal of the true qualities of Botticelli’s manner and his contributions to the history of Renaissance art. The public “confession” that can be now attached to the *Nativity* and to other works in the Columbia Museum of Art that have benefited from Kress-sponsored conservation will aid visitors in applying these same lessons in appreciation when viewing other Old Master paintings in the Museum’s collection and elsewhere.

Despite what has been learned of the true condition of the *Nativity* in Columbia, the perceptive appraisal of R. Langton Douglas six decades ago still amplifies our appreciation of Botticelli’s gentle scene. His eloquence has only been strengthened by a better understanding of the painting’s complex history and by the thorough attention given to its condition. Restored and handsomely installed as a visual focal point in the Renaissance and Baroque galleries of the new Columbia Museum of Art, Sandro Botticelli’s lovely *Nativity* continues to captivate.

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NOTES

1. Letter from R. Langton Douglas, dated March 5, 1943, in the painting’s files at the Columbia Museum of Art.
2. Gabriele Mandel, *The Complete Paintings of Botticelli* (New York, Harry N. Abrams, 1967) where it is described on page 91 as a fresco copy of the *Nativity* fresco in the Florentine church of Santa Maria Novella, measuring 150 × 250 cm, which “went from the Boehler Gallery, Munich, to the Kress Collection, New York, which transferred it to the Columbia Museum of Art” and on page 109 (cat. no. 149), it is illustrated with a line drawing reproduced from Reinach. In its second appearance in Mandel’s book, the painting is described as “The *Nativity*, formerly Budapest, Von Nemeš Collection” and listed as a workshop production, executed in tempera on a wood support. The same entry also associates it with the Abdy Collection and says that “its present whereabouts are unknown.”
3. The text of this statement reads: “*Io sottoscritto Francesco Steffanoni di Bergamo (Italia), traspositore di dipinti, dichiaro: di aver trasportato il dipinto ramp.¹⁶ il Sacro Presepio, di cui è oggetto codesta stessa fotografia, dal muro su tele tel delle dimensioni di m. 1.40 x. 1.60. In fede Franco Steffanoni Munchen, 28 Ottobre m.c.m. XXVII.*” [Translation: “I, the undersigned Francesco Steffanoni of Bergamo (Italy), a specialist in the transfer of paintings, declare: to have transferred the painting representing the Holy Nativity, which is the object in this photograph, from the wall to canvas whose dimensions are 1.40 × 1.60 meters. In fede Franco Steffanoni Munich, October 28, 1927.”] A copy of this document is in the painting’s files at the Columbia Museum of Art.
4. The recent restoration of the *Nativity* concluded that it had been transferred to a linen canvas mounted on a cradled solid support. Letter in the files of the Columbia Museum of Art from Dianne Dwyer Modestini dated January 5, 1995.
5. Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi, *Art of the Renaissance from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*. Columbia, SC: Columbia Museum of Art, 1962, p. 68; Ronald Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli: Complete Catalogue*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1978, II, p. 33.
6. Contini-Bonacossi 1962 (cited in note 5), p. 68.
7. Lightbown 1978 (cited in note 5), II, p. 33.
8. Von Nemeš’s first name also appears in the literature spelled as “Marcel” or “Marzell.” His portrait, painted in 1928–29 by Oskar Kokoschka, hangs in the Wolfgang-Gurlitt Museum in Linz, Austria.
9. Contini-Bonacossi 1962 (cited in note 5), p. 68.
10. Ibid. Six separate publications dealing with the von Nemeš Collection during this period are cited in the files of the Columbia Museum as having included the *Nativity*. They are: Gabriel von Terey, *Katalog der Sammlung des Kgl. Rates Marzell von Nemeš, Budapest* (Düsseldorf: Städtische Kunsthalle, 1912), No. 3; August L. Mayer, “Die Sammlung Marzell von Nemeš in Budapest,” *Westermann’s Monatshefte* 133 (December 1912), pp. 495 and 540 (illus.); Georg Biermann, “Die Sammlung Marzell von Nemeš,” *Der Cicerone* (1912), p. 374 (illus., fig. 5); Gabriel Mourey, “La Collection Marzell von Nemeš,” *Les Arts* (June 1913), pp. 2–3; François de Miomandre, “Les Idées d’un amateur d’art,” *L’Art et les Artistes* (March 1913), p. 251 (illus.); and

- Emile Dacier, "La Collection Marzell de Nemeš," *Revue de l'Art Ancien et Moderne* (June 1913), p. 458.
11. Lightbown 1978 (cited in note 5), II, p. 33.
 12. Contini-Bonacossi 1962 (cited in note 5), p. 68 and Lightbown 1978 (cited in note 5), II, p. 33. The former lists the Sedelmeyer Gallery catalogue as Charles Sedelmeyer, *Catalogue of the Twelfth Series of 100 Paintings by Old Masters* (Paris, Sedelmeyer Gallery, 1913), p. 62, No. 39 (illus.).
 13. Salomon Reinach, *Répertoire de Peintures du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance* (Paris, 1918), IV, p. 76 (illus.). Thirteen years later Raimond von Marle included the *Nativity* (as a Botticelli school piece) in his authoritative *The Development of the Italian School of Painting* (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1931), XII, p. 272.
 14. This information is contained in a translated document in the Kress Foundation files with a copy at the Columbia Museum of Art.
 15. *Ibid.*
 16. This is attested to in a Columbia Museum file copy of a Western Union Telegram from Paris to the Duveen Company in New York, dated Tuesday, August 8, 1939, that reads: "Botticelli *Nativity* came from Nemeš Collection. When Nemeš died he owed money banks which were taken over German Government who gave pictures to Kaiser Friedrich Museum who kept them stored several years until sold auction Munich."
 17. This is the impression given in Lightbown 1978 (cited in note 5), II, p. 33.
 18. This is documented in the sales catalogue *Kunstwerke aus dem Besitz der Staatlichen Museen* (Munich, Julius Boehler, 1–2 June 1937), pp. 104–5, No. 654, plate 48. The title of this auction catalogue may have contributed to the misunderstanding of the *Nativity's* status while in Berlin.
 19. See the copy of a letter in the Kress Foundation files and those of the Columbia Museum of Art, dated October 29, 1937, sent from New York and requesting information regarding Vannoni's prices. Vannoni's frame was still on the painting when it arrived in Columbia in 1954 for its initial installation in the new Kress wing of the Columbia Museum. Notations on the reverse of file photographs in the Columbia Museum indicate that the removal of Vannoni's frame and the reinstallation of the *Nativity* took place between late 1961 and October 1962. The Vannoni frame was subsequently deaccessioned and its present whereabouts are unknown. A photograph published in the *State and Columbia Record* of December 19, 1965 (copy in Museum files) shows the *Nativity* in its new frame and setting. The *Nativity* remained so displayed until the Columbia Museum moved into its new quarters in 1998.
 20. On this see R. Langton Douglas, "Recent additions to the Kress Collection," *The Burlington Magazine* Vol. 88 (April 1946), p. 82, plate ivb.
 21. The former Taylor residence, with its gallery wing additions, was home to the Columbia Museum of Art from 1950 until 1998 when the collection was transferred to its present location. The initial Kress donation was augmented in 1964 by the gift of forty-four works of art, consisting of seventeen paintings, four sculptures, ten objects of decorative art, nine textiles, and four pieces of furniture. These seventy-one works from the Kress Foundation form the core of the Columbia Museum's holdings in Renaissance and Baroque art, now more than 200 in number.
 22. Copies of these opinions are in the Kress Foundation files and at the Columbia Museum of Art. Most of them are given in summary form in Contini-Bonacossi 1962 (cited in note 5), p. 68. Berenson's initial attribution was based on a photograph of the *Nativity* on which he wrote "Sandro Botticelli, about 1475. B. Berenson." That of Fredericksen and Zeri was contained in their *Census of Pre-Nineteenth-Century Italian Paintings in North American Public Collections* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1972); that of Shapley in her *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection, Vol. 1: Italian Schools, XIII–XV Century* (London, Phaidon, 1966), p. 117, fig. 318. The most recent observations of Everett Fahy are summarized in the restoration report submitted to the Columbia Museum of Art by Dianne Dwyer Modestini on January 5, 1995.
 23. See the discussion of this drawing in Lightbown 1978 (cited in note 5), II, pp. 161–2. Another drawing in the Uffizi collection, not cited in the literature but possibly related, is a badly damaged rendition in pen and ink of the *Adoration of the Child*. See the discussion in Lightbown 1978, p. 163. This drawing, over which there is considerable debate as to authorship and dating, depicts an animated Christ Child between a dozing Joseph on the left and an adoring Mary on the right. The attitude of the Virgin resembles that in Columbia, and there is some similarity between the *bambini* as well.
 24. See the discussion in Lightbown 1978 (cited in note 5), II, pp. 32–3. His treatment of the Columbia *Nativity* is appended to this entry. Also see Caterina Caneva, *Botticelli: Catalogo Completo dei Dipinti* (Florence, Cantini, 1990), p. 46.
 25. This was the opinion of Carlo Gamba, *Botticelli* (Milan, Ulrico Hoepli, 1936), pp. 115–16.
 26. The general character of Botticelli's composition in the *Nativity* fresco, as well as the representation of such elements as the wood-beamed stall, might be compared with a now ruined fresco by Paolo Uccello in the cloister arcade of the former hospital of San Martino della Scala in Florence, dated around 1446. Botticelli would have known Uccello's fresco since he is documented as having worked at the same institution in the spring of 1481, when he executed a fresco of the *Annunciation* for the tomb of the hospital's founder Cione Pollini; Botticelli could have been familiar with it much earlier.
 27. R. Langton Douglas, letter dated March 5, 1943 in the files of the Columbia Museum of Art.
 28. On this project, see Giovanni Fanelli, *Firenze: Architettura e Città* (Florence, Vallecchi, 1973), I, pp. 447–52.
 29. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 10 and 68. The churches then swept away in the *risanamento* of old Florence included S. Andrea, S. Pier Buonconsiglio, S. Tommaso, S. Maria in Campidoglio, S. Leone, S. Miniato fra le Torri, S. Salvatore, S. Ruffillo, S. Maria degli Vigni, S. Donato dei Vecchietti, and the Oratorio di S. Maria della Tromba. On these destroyed churches and their furnishings see Walter and Elizabeth Paatz, *Die Kirchen von Florenz*, 6 vols. (Frankfurt, Klostermann, 1940–1954). Plans published in vol. 6 show the sites of dozens of churches throughout the city that have either

vanished or been converted to secular use. The Columbia *Nativity* could have come from one of these or from a countryside parish in the outskirts of Florence.

30. On these outdoor devotionals, see “i tabernacoli” in *Aspetti Minori di Firenze*, ed. Piero Bargellini (Florence, Azienda Autonoma di Turismo, n.d.), pp. 29–41.
31. This photograph may have been taken in response to the suggestion made in 1932 by Professor Graf; see the discussion below.
32. Report copy in Registrar’s files, Columbia Museum of Art. This document, dated February 29, 1932 is a translation of Graf’s report; the translator is not identified.
33. Lightbown 1978 (cited in note 5), I, p. 155.
34. On Botticelli’s use of this motif see Horst Bredekamp, *Sandro Botticelli: La Primavera* (Frankfurt, Fischer, 1988), pp. 40–46. A similar motif can be seen on the Virgin’s shoulder in the *Madonna del Libro* in Milan and on Mercury’s cloak in Botticelli’s *Primavera* in the Uffizi.

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

- Figs. 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, and 9, pp. 78, 86, 88, and 89. Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, SC, Samuel H. Kress Collection (CMA 1954.29).
- Fig. 3, p. 81. Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, SC, Samuel H. Kress Collection (CMA 1954.29). Museum file photograph dated fall 1961.
- Fig. 4, p. 82. Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, SC, Samuel H. Kress Collection (CMA 1954.29). Museum file photograph dated October 1, 1962.
- Fig. 5, p. 85. Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, SC, Samuel H. Kress Collection (CMA 1954.29). Undated Museum file photograph.



Venus and Cupid, ca. 1500
Girolamo di Benvenuto
Egg tempera and oil on wood panel
20 1/2 × 20 in. (51.1 × 50.8 cm)
Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado
1961.172 (K-222)



FIG. 1. *Venus and Cupid*, before cleaning and restoration.



FIG. 2. *Venus and Cupid* (fig. 1), after cleaning and restoration.

The Re-use of a *Descò da Parto*

Mika Okawa and Dianne Dwyer Modestini

IN 1995 THE GIROLAMO DI BENVENUTO *Venus and Cupid* (figs. 1, 2, and 3), from the Samuel H. Kress Collection of the Denver Art Museum, came to the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University for treatment. A Siennese painter, Girolamo (1470–1524) was the son of Benvenuto di Giovanni with whom he collaborated and whose style he imitated.¹ The painting in question is of particular interest as it is a *descò da parto* or birth tray, a salver presented to a mother on the birth of her child; in this case the form is a sixteen-sided polygonal panel painted in tempera and oil. It had sustained severe damages in the form of deep scratches, abrasions, losses and stains, probably from its use as a piece of household furniture, but also from deliberate vandalism of the nudes, a common occurrence. The perfectly legible coat of arms on the bottom has not been identified.

Two interesting features of this object emerged in the course of examination and restoration. The first has to do with its provenance and critical history. It was acquired by the Florentine dealer Count Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi from a Conte della Gherardesca, a member of an old and noble Florentine family. As Fern Rusk Shapley records:

When it was in the Gherardesca Collection, κ-222 was, according to Schubring ... decorated on the back with a standing Cupid in a circular simulated frame. In a letter of Feb. 19, 1949, R. Mather writes of having seen back and front as two separate panels before κ-222 entered the Kress Collection. An X-ray made by A. Burroughs soon after it entered the Kress Collections shows a circle

corresponding to the inner circle of the tondo frame but no further evidence of the tondo panel. Discussing the X-rays, Burroughs indicated that there was some kind of design at this time on the reverse of the panel: "In spite of the design on the reverse of this panel," he says, "the paint is well recorded in good condition." Whatever the design, it seems to have disappeared when the panel was treated for cradling in 1933. Not even the circle shows in an X-ray made in the 1950s. The present whereabouts of the cupid tondo is unknown.²

In a footnote in the third volume of the Kress Italian paintings catalogues,³ Shapley had identified the missing back of the *desco*:

The reverse of this salver has been given to the Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome (Menotti Bequest), as noted by Federico Zeri (in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. CIX, 1967, p. 477) and listed in the posthumous edition of B. Berenson (*Italian Pictures . . . Central and North Italian Schools*, vol. 1, 1968, p. 187).

Samuel H. Kress acquired the *desco* in 1932. As stated, Alan Burroughs's X-radiograph revealed a "circle" and "some kind of design on the reverse of the panel." After the painting was purchased, it

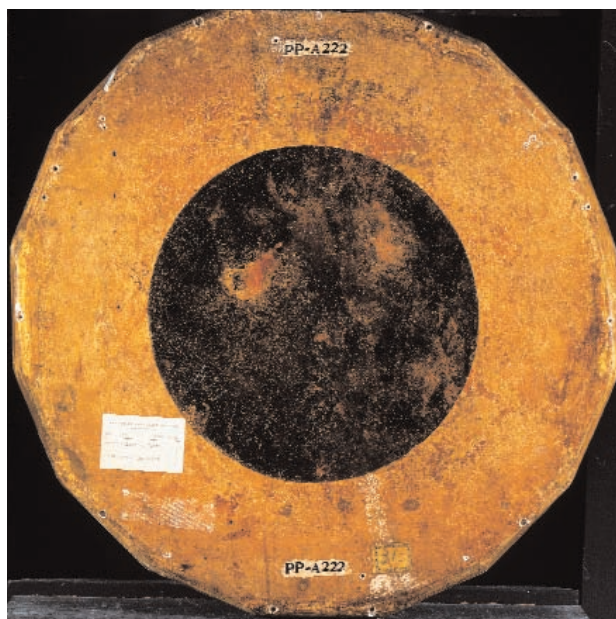


FIG. 3. *Venus and Cupid* (fig. 1), verso.

was cradled in Stephen Pichetto's studio according to usual practice, presumably by the carpenter Angelo Fatta, and fitted into a shadow box with a Masonite backing. When new radiographs were made in the 1950s, the heavy cradle made it impossible to determine if there was any design on the reverse. What is more, the very presence of a cradle would logically lead to the conclusion that the *desco* lacked its original back. Evidently no one saw the painting out of its shadow box and assumed that Zeri was right, that the double-sided *desco* had been split and sold as two separate paintings before 1932. As late as 1997 in a definitive study, *I Deschi da Parto e La Pittura del primo Rinascimento Toscano*,⁴ the presumed verso, the *Standing Cupid* in Castel Sant'Angelo, is illustrated together with the recto in Denver.

When the *desco* was freed from the shadow box with its Masonite backing we were surprised to see that it had retained its original back, a simple design of a large black circle on a white ground, consistent with Alan Burroughs's notes. On further examination we were amazed to discover that a cradle was concealed within the *desco*. The panel had been sliced in half and the inside hollowed out to accommodate a heavy cradle; the two halves were then rejoined with screws. There was no doubt that they had once been a single object. This bizarre undertaking was accomplished with great skill; a thin, barely perceptible cut separated the front from the reverse. While we have not had an opportunity to examine the Castel Sant'Angelo *Standing Cupid* that bears devices associated with the della Gherardesca family, the two *deschi* certainly were never part of the same object and may have entirely different provenances.

Parts of *Venus and Cupid* were reworked at an early date: the mordant gilding, the coat of arms, and the delicately painted flowers in the foreground appear to be by another hand, in a different medium (possibly aqueous or an emulsion), and were all added later. It is impossible to say with certainty how many years intervened between the creation of the original image and its later embellishments. They are certainly antique but were painted when the original, which appears to

be in an oil medium, was thoroughly dry. The later additions are brittle with a different craquelure pattern, and they sometimes cover losses. The entire coat of arms belongs to this reworking and gives credence to Mather's observation in 1949 that it was not original.

Noting that the verso of the *desco* was original and the recto bore later embellishments including the alteration of the coat of arms, it might be hypothesized that the panel had been used as a salver for another birth, perhaps fifty to one hundred years later. As already mentioned, the coat of arms has not been identified. Perhaps the simple decoration of the reverse, a black circle on a white field, has some significance. There is no doubt that the confusion, first introduced by Schubring in 1923, between the Castel Sant'Angelo Cupid and our *desco* is finally resolved. *Venus and Cupid*, though tampered with, is intact; the coat of arms, while not original, is antique. With this information in the future it may be possible to shed light on this intriguing instance of mistaken identity and re-use of a Renaissance ceremonial object in a later period.

Because of the history of the object, during the restoration we left the reworked passages in their entirety and tried to be selective in our retouching, particularly of the numerous gouges and depressions that characterize the Renaissance objects made for household use, such as *cassoni*, removing the most disturbing damages but not trying to make the image perfect.

Dianne Dwyer Modestini is a paintings conservator, consultant to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and Adjunct Professor at the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

Mika Okawa is a paintings conservator at the Art Conservation Laboratory in Tokyo, Japan. She received an M.A. in Conservation Science from Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, where her dissertation subject was solidification problems in modern paint. She attended the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University as a special student.

NOTES

1. Fern Rusk Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection, Vol. 1: Italian Schools, XIII–XV Century* (London, Phaidon, 1966), p. 161 and the entry on Benvenuto di Giovanni (di Meo del Guasta) by Cynthia Coté, *Grove Dictionary of Art* (New York, Grove Press, 1996), Vol. 3, pp. 750–51.
2. Shapley 1966 (cited in note 1), p. 162.
3. Fern Rusk Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection, Vol. 3: Italian Schools, XVI–XVIII Century*. London: Phaidon, 1973, p. 387.
4. Cecilia De Carli, *Archivi di Arte Antica*. Turin: Umberto Allemandi & Co., 1997, no. 60, pp. 200–201.

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

Figs. 1, 2, and 3, pp. 94 and 96. Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO, Samuel H. Kress Collection (1961.172).



The Triumphs of Love, Chastity, and Death

Follower of Andrea Mantegna, late 15th century

Egg tempera and oil on cradled wood panel

20 × 21¹/₄ in. (50.8 × 54 cm); 20³/₄ × 21³/₈ in. (52.1 × 54 cm);

20⁵/₈ × 21³/₈ in. (52.4 × 54.3 cm)

Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado

1961.169.1 (K-12, 13, 15)



FIG. 1. *The Triumphs of Love, Chastity, and Death*, before cleaning and restoration.



FIG. 2. *The Triumphs of Love, Chastity, and Death* (fig. 1), after cleaning and restoration (framed together).

The Triumphs of Petrarch: An Analysis of a Renaissance Decorative Cycle

Wendy Partridge

A SERIES OF SIX PAINTINGS FROM THE Kress Collection in the Denver Art Museum was received at the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, for treatment in 1995 (figs. 1, 2, 3, and 4). The series is based on the *Triumphs*, a long narrative poem by Petrarch begun in 1340 and still unfinished at his death in 1374, describing the successive triumphs of Love, Chastity, Death, Fame, Time, and Divinity.

The *Triumphs* were one of the most popular secular subjects in the Renaissance, illustrated in countless manuscript illuminations, woodcuts, engravings, tapestries, and paintings. There is surprisingly little concrete imagery in the poem, and Petrarch described only one chariot, belonging to Love and drawn by four white horses. Depictions of the *Triumphs*, however, almost universally put all six allegorical figures on chariots, each led by a set of different animals. Chastity, in the Denver panel, is drawn by unicorns, Death by water buffalo, Fame by elephants, Time by deer, and angels lead Divinity. The earliest manuscript illuminations of this type are from Florence, date to 1442, and are possibly by Apollonio di Giovanni.¹ The first panel paintings of the subject also seem to be from Florence and date to about the same period.

The Denver paintings were sent to the Conservation Center because a thick layer of varnish had yellowed, and there were numerous awkward, discolored retouchings. In the course of treatment, areas of original composition that had been overfilled and overpainted were uncovered. Once the paintings were cleaned and retouchings removed, the cycle revealed a clarity, brilliance of

color, and richness of detail. The extensive use of gold and ultramarine (largely overpainted in the skies by a dark Prussian blue) suggested a luxury commission of considerable expense. After conservation, the quality and sumptuousness of the paintings was far more evident.

Fern Rusk Shapley attributed the paintings to a follower of Andrea Mantegna.² Their provenance can be traced back only to the late 1870s at the Castello of Colloredo near Udine.³ After their dispersal to various collectors and dealers in the late nineteenth century, the panels were reunited in the Kress Collection in 1927–28.⁴ The original function of the cycle, its commission and artist, and the relationship to Andrea Mantegna and the Gonzaga court are puzzling problems.

The paintings were first published by Joseph Wastler in 1880. Wastler compared the compositions to remarkably similar depictions found on ivory reliefs in the cathedral at Graz (figs. 5, 6, and 7). By analyzing heraldic devices, he was able to link the Graz pieces to the Gonzaga family sometime after 1432.⁵ He also suggested a possible connection between the Denver images and a lost series of Petrarchan *Triumphs* known in 1501 when they were used with Andrea Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar* as decorations for a temporary theater at the court of Mantua.

The theater decoration was described in a 1501 letter from Sigismondo Cantelmo, a Ferrarese courtier, to Duke Ercole of Ferrara. (See Appendix for the full text of the letter.) Cantelmo stated that the Petrarch cycle was also by Mantegna, and Wastler and several later scholars believed this lost cycle was by Andrea's son Francesco. Wastler thought that Francesco had painted the Denver cycle as a preparatory study for the large-scale theater decorations,⁶ a hypothesis that now seems untenable. Later scholars have suggested other attributions including Francesco Buonsignori,⁷ Francesco Benaglio,⁸ Niccolò da Verona,⁹ and Girolamo da Cremona.¹⁰

In 1915 Paul Schubring included the panels in his book on *cassoni*, placing them in the context of luxury domestic furniture probably produced on the occasion of a wealthy marriage. Like Wastler,

he noted their compositional similarity to the Graz ivory reliefs and identified the Graz ivory chests as produced for the 1477 wedding of Paola Gonzaga and Leonard von Goerz.¹¹

Representations of the *Trionfi*, in fact, had become a popular subject for domestic Florentine furniture decoration by about 1445. Other examples of *Trionfi* panels include an anonymous set from the Palazzo Davanzati¹² and a Pesellino cycle at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum dated to about 1445.¹³ The *Trionfi* were one of the popular subjects of Pesellino's shop, and two other versions are extant. A fragmentary frontal with only Love and Chastity is now in the National Gallery of Scotland and was probably done by a painter who trained in Apollonio di Giovanni's workshop.¹⁴ Panels with Love, Chastity, Death, and Fame are in the Siena Pinacoteca; Schubring tentatively attributed them to Pier Francesco Fiorentino, while Giovanni Carandente gave them to Marco del Buono.¹⁵ There are also Jacopo Sellaio's large triumphs of Love, Chastity, Time, and Divinity of about 1490,¹⁶ and a *Triumph of Chastity* by a follower of Botticelli that was probably part of a larger cycle.¹⁷ Although it cannot be demonstrated that these works were all commissioned for weddings, the majority probably were. Almost all 173 entries in Apollonio di Giovanni's account book, for example, seem to relate to marriage commissions.¹⁸ From northern Italy, there is also a small, gilt pastiglia "cofanetto" or jewelry box depicting *Trionfi* that dates between 1450 and 1460 and is believed to be a marriage gift for an aristocratic couple, perhaps commissioned by a member of the Este family.¹⁹

PART I: ORIGINAL FUNCTION

It is almost certain that the Kress *Triumphs*, given their dimensions, format, and subject matter, were part of the decoration for luxurious domestic furniture. Each of the Denver panels measures approximately 52 × 54 cm. Their X-radiographs reveal that the support consisted originally of two continuous planks of wood, on each of which three scenes were painted.²⁰ They were probably either *cassoni* frontals or *spalliera* panels. A *cassone*

The Triumphs of Fame, Time, and Divinity

Follower of Andrea Mantegna, late 15th century

Egg tempera and oil on cradled wood panel

20¹/₂ × 21¹/₄ in. (52.1 × 54 cm); 20³/₈ × 21³/₈ in. (51.8 × 54.3 cm);

20¹/₂ × 21³/₈ in. (52.1 × 54.3 cm)

Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado

1961.169.2 (K-10, 11, 14)



FIG. 3. *The Triumphs of Fame, Time, and Divinity*, before cleaning and restoration.

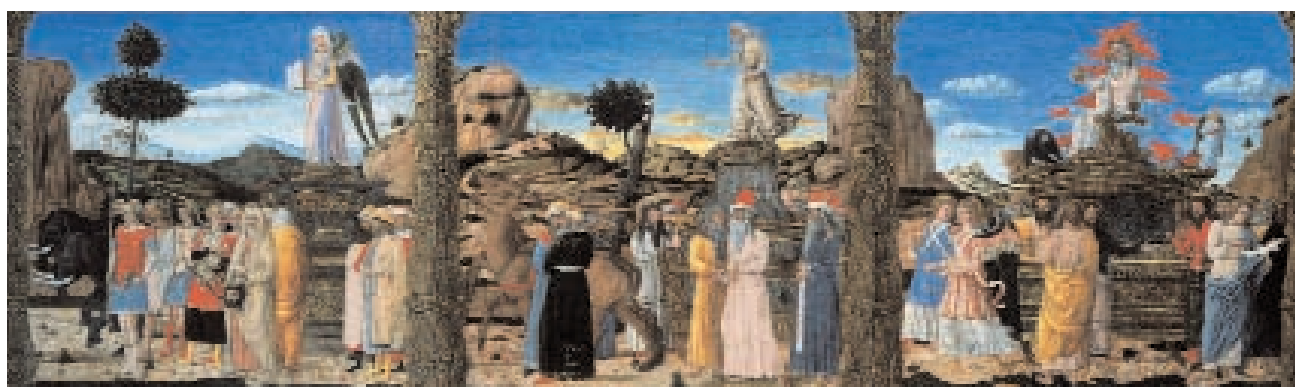


FIG. 4. *The Triumphs of Fame, Time, and Divinity* (fig. 3), after cleaning and restoration (framed together).

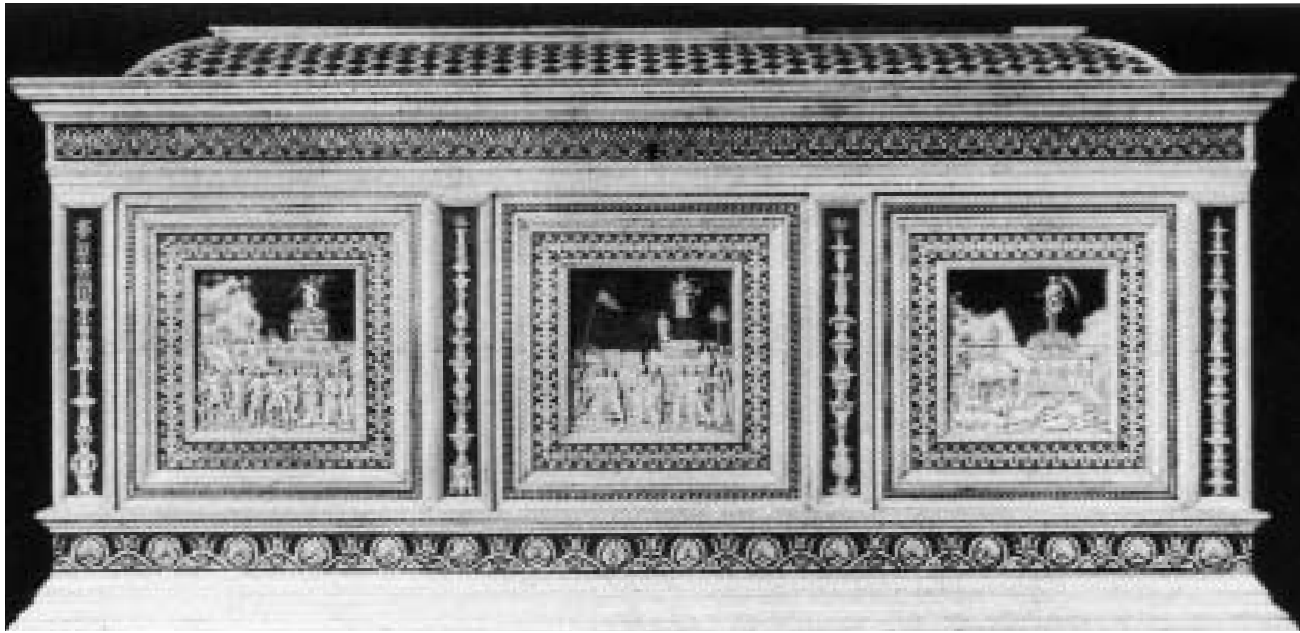


FIG. 5. The Graz *cassone*, *Triumphs of Love, Chastity, and Death*, ivory *cassone* frontal, 1477, Cathedral of Graz, Austria. One of a pair of *cassoni* commissioned for the wedding of Paola Gonzaga and Leonard von Georz.



FIG. 6. The Graz *cassone*, *Triumph of Chastity* (fig. 5), detail.



FIG. 7. The Graz *cassone*, *Triumph of Death* (fig. 5), detail.

was a hope chest often used for seating as well as storage while the *spalliera* is a somewhat fluid term that described both wainscoting, set above eye level into the walls of a room, and painted panels providing backs for furniture. *Cassoni*, *cassapanche* (benches), or *lettucci* (day beds) could all have had *spalliere*.²¹ Scholars writing on Renaissance domestic furniture have often pointed out that this is a difficult topic since so little painted decoration is preserved in its original context.²²

Each plank would have been approximately 52 × 162 cm, somewhat larger than a typical *cassone* frontal which averaged about 42 × 149 cm.²³ They could simply have been atypically large *cassoni*. The large Graz chests, after all, measure 95 × 190 cm.²⁴

The Kress cycle's pattern of damage, however, is not consistent with that found on many *cassoni*. *Cassoni*, placed on the floor, often sustained a significant number of scratches and abrasions. Furthermore, since the locking mechanism for a *cassone* was usually located at the center of the chest in the molding above the image area, the top center of the painted panel often has a series of indentations made by keys that struck its surface. Although the Kress paintings have sustained a significant number of losses, these relate to knots in the wood support rather than to harsh use or damage from banging keys. Ellen Callmann believed, furthermore, that the horizon somewhat above center on the Kress paintings makes the images read better when seen slightly above eye level,²⁵ a further argument against the *cassone* panel theory.

The Kress cycle may have originally formed *spalliere* paired with *cassoni* in the manner of the set painted by Biagio di Antonio in collaboration with Jacopo Sellaio for the Nerli–Morelli marriage of 1472 (fig. 8). The framework for the two *spalliere* has been much restored, and they were not originally attached to the chests. It appears that the chests were originally joined by a single long *spalliera* since Morelli's records, apparently account books, show payment to Sellaio and Antonio for “a pair of chests and a *spalliera* and a base . . .”²⁶ While the Nerli–Morelli *cassoni*/*spalliera* is the only extant example of such a set, it does not seem to have been a unique arrangement.

The earliest known record of a pair of chests with a painted *spalliera* above comes from Bernardo di Stoldo Rinieri's *Ricordi* of 1458. In the *Ricordi* he documented an expenditure for the redecoration of his home prior to his marriage to Bartolommea di Dietosalvi.²⁷ “A *spalliera* that is 13 *braccia* long by one and a half *braccia* high above said chests, painted with the story of Lorenzo's tournament, with gilt framing and columns” is also described in the 1492 inventory from Lorenzo de' Medici's palazzo on the Via Larga.²⁸ Or again, Giovanni Rucellai listed a present of “a pair of chests with very rich *spalle*” for his son's wedding in 1466.²⁹ The two panels of the *Story of Jason* at the Metropolitan Museum were probably *spalliere* for paired *cassoni*.³⁰ At 60 × 150 cm each, they are similar in size to the Denver panels.

Decorated *spalliere* could also be associated with *lettucci* and benches as we know from inventories, records of payment,³¹ and illustrations. There is, for example, a woodcut from Savonarola's 1499 *Predica dell'Arte del Ben Morire* where the design on the high back of the *lettuccio* was probably meant to be intarsia. A *Birth of the Virgin* from Verona of circa 1500 shows a *lettuccio* depicting a landscape.³²



FIG. 8. Morelli *cassone*, Zanobi di Domenico and Jacopo del Sellaio, 1472, wood, gesso, tempera, and gilding. Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery, London.



FIG. 9. *Triumph of Chastity* (fig. 1), detail of the coat of arms.



FIG. 10. *Triumph of Fame* (fig. 3), detail of the coat of arms.

With the exception of the school of Verona painting, it should be noted, all mentioned examples of *spalliere* paired with *cassoni*, *lettucci*, or benches come from Florence. This may be a result of the comparative lack of research on furniture in northern Italy. Fewer may have been made, and what does survive has not been studied. Very little is known about domestic furniture at the court of Milan under the Sforza or the court of Mantua whose furnishings were completely dispersed in 1708.³³ *Spalliere* do not seem to be an exclusively Florentine phenomenon—the Siense also made them.³⁴ Although *lettucci* have been assumed to be mainly Tuscan, there are also records of them in Genoa, Milan, and Ferrara.³⁵ It should be remembered, finally, that wealthy Florence often set trends and provided furniture fashions for the rest of Italy.³⁶

PART II: POSSIBLE OCCASIONS FOR THE COMMISSION

The Kress paintings were probably commissioned in the context of a marriage, regardless of their original format. They probably were intended to adorn a bedroom, or at least the private apartments,

of the married couple. Considerable expense was spent on such furnishings.³⁷ The principal bedchamber could also be a reception room for honored visitors or favored friends,³⁸ its furnishings often intended to create an impression. Again using an example from Florence, it has been established that the largest concentration of purchases for the home occurred on the occasion of marriage and that most of these commissions were installed in the bedchamber.³⁹

Had the paintings not been examined at the Conservation Center, the case for their having been commissioned for a Gonzaga marriage would have rested on the panels' similarity to Paola Gonzaga's *cassoni*. The Colloredo provenance is also significant, since in 1721 Carlo Ludovico Colloredo married Eleonara Gonzaga of Vescovato.⁴⁰ The Colloredo family, then, could have possessed some Renaissance Gonzaga furniture.

When Professor Jonathan Alexander saw the Kress paintings at the Conservation Center he identified the tiny coat of arms on the tower in the background of the *Triumph of Chastity* as belonging to the Gonzaga, and in the *Triumph of*

Fame as the *stemma* of the Sforza (figs. 9 and 10).⁴¹ Although it is perhaps not wise to place too much significance on these shields, heraldic devices were used in the Renaissance with great care. Their placement near the images of Chastity and Fame would have been eminently appropriate in the context of a marriage, the first for the bride, the second for the groom.

Professor Alexander, moreover, pointed out a 1489 marriage between Maddalena Gonzaga (1472–1490), sister of the Marchese Francesco II, and Giovanni Sforza (died 1510), Lord of Pesaro.⁴² (See family tree, fig. 11.) The marriage did not last long since Maddalena died in childbirth in 1490. Another Sforza–Gonzaga engagement that might have provided an occasion for the commission was the betrothal of Galeazzo Maria Sforza (1444–1476), heir to the Duchy of Milan, and Dorotea Gonzaga (1449–1467),

daughter of Barbara of Brandenburg and the Marchese Ludovico. Dorotea was also sister to Paola of the Graz ivory *cassoni*. Galeazzo was first engaged to Dorotea's sister Susanna, but the match was transferred to Dorotea in 1457 when Susanna seemed to be becoming a hunchback. When Dorotea attained her majority in 1463, Galeazzo's father, the Duke of Milan, sent a letter to Barbara of Brandenburg requesting a medical examination to ensure that his son's new fiancée would not also become hunchbacked. Ludovico refused. In 1465, the second marriage contract was also annulled, and Dorotea died in 1467.⁴³ According to this scenario, the panels could have been painted sometime between 1457 and 1463. This agrees with Ronald Lightbown's dating of the panels to the 1450s or 1460s,⁴⁴ and seems, further, to support the proposed attribution discussed below.

6. Gonzaga rulers of Mantua

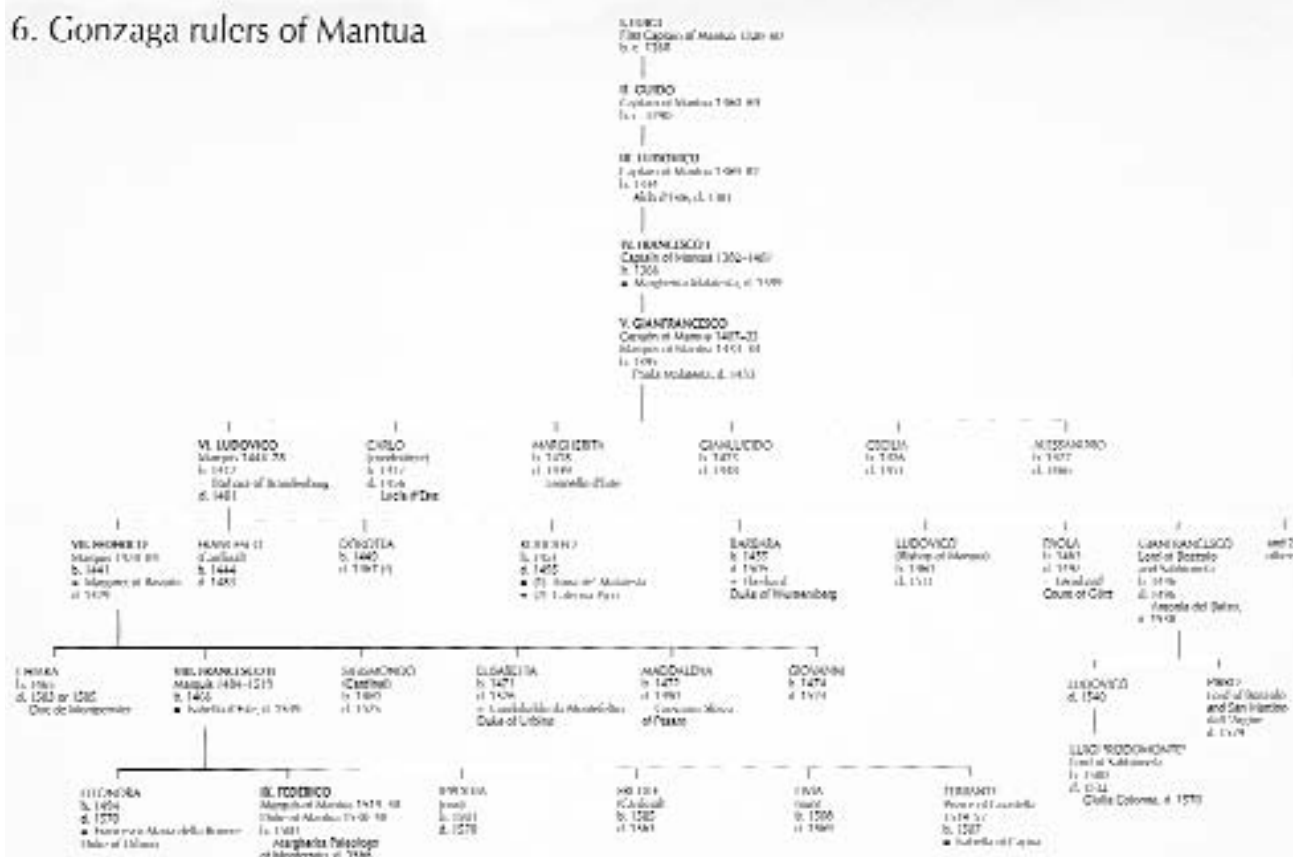


FIG. 11. The Gonzaga family tree.

In either case it is necessary to discuss the small size of the coats of arms. Furniture commissioned for marriages tended to contain rather more visible heraldic devices. We see this in the numerous Gonzaga *imprese* found on Paola Gonzaga's Graz *cassoni* or in large Gonzaga/Montefeltro coats of arms and Montefeltro devices for a marriage chest commissioned for Elisabetta Gonzaga (Maddalena's sister) on the occasion of her marriage in 1488 to Guidobaldo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino.⁴⁵ Elisabetta's *cassoni* was somewhat atypical, though, since devices and coats of arms were often found on the sides and lids of chests. This was true for the Graz chests or the *Conquest of Trebizond cassone* at the Metropolitan Museum, one of the few painted *cassoni* to survive almost intact. Coats of arms and heraldic devices are also found in the decorative pastiglia work framing the Metropolitan's *King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* and the *Conquest of Naples by Charles of Durazzo* frontals. The Denver panels, then, could have been framed by decorative *imprese* or paired with chests with more prominent heraldic devices similar to the one belonging to Elisabetta Gonzaga.

Further information might be found in the Mantua archives. In Pietro Torelli's summary of the documents, there is a category for *Sponsali, Maritaggi e Doti delle principesse di Mantova passate in altre famiglie, e loro ragioni* with headings for "Dorothea figlia di Lodovico II march.," and "Maddalena figlia di Federico III march., moglie di Giovanni Sforza signore di Pesaro." There are also "Atti relativi ai matrimoni di Elisabetta e Maddalena Gonzaga."⁴⁶ A look through these records could reveal the type of furnishings commissioned for the engagements even if there were no specific records concerning a cycle of painted Petrarchan *Triumphs*.

PART III: A POSSIBLE ATTRIBUTION

Caterina Furlan's 1973 article was the most recent attempt to attribute the Denver series. Her attribution to Girolamo da Cremona does not seem convincing, since Girolamo was significantly more accomplished than the anonymous Kress painter. However, there do seem to be similarities between



FIG. 12. *Adoration of the Shepherds*, illumination from Barbara of Brandenburg's *Missal*, 1461–68, tempera on parchment. Cathedral of San Pietro, Mantua.

the two painters, especially when the Denver panels are compared to Girolamo's early work in the *Missal* that he illuminated in Mantua for Barbara of Brandenburg between approximately 1461 and 1468.⁴⁷ The similarities are not particularly surprising since Girolamo da Cremona could be considered a Mantegna follower, especially during his stay at Mantua. He seems to have been a friend (and possibly a student) of Mantegna's and was probably recommended by him to Barbara of Brandenburg.⁴⁸ There is, however, a second hand found in the *Missal*, working in a style similar to, but not as accomplished as Girolamo's.

This second artist seems to have been responsible for the *Adoration of the Magi* and the decorated initial "I" (figs. 12 and 13).⁴⁹ The illuminator's rocky landscapes display a more exaggerated chiaroscuro than the boulders in the Kress paintings, although the backgrounds of the two illuminations and the *Trionfi* are quite similar. The blue-green hill dotted with white city walls and towers in the *Adoration* is almost identical to the blue-green hill in the background of *Chastity*. The rhythm and shape of the bare trees in the *Adoration* remind one of the bare trees in *Death*.

Both artists had similar problems in rendering anatomy. The foreshortening of the Virgin in the *Adoration* does not quite work. Her head is a bit too big for her body in the same way that the captive Jupiter's head in *Love* is also too large. The illuminator allows faces to intersect in a bizarre manner, a hallmark of the Kress Petrarch



FIG. 13. Decorated initial “T” illumination from Barbara of Brandenburg’s *Missal*, 1461–68, tempera on parchment, Cathedral of San Pietro, Mantua.

cycle. In the *Adoration*, one shepherd’s bushy hair obscures the mouth and chin of the second. This produces a clumsy effect similar to Time’s chariot slicing through the faces of his entourage or the strange intersection of the faces of the old men leading Time’s procession. By contrast, the sweetness of the Virgin’s face with its high forehead, heavy lidded eyes, and downturned bow mouth could belong to Fame or to any lady surrounding Chastity.

A final comparison in favor of the anonymous illuminator is the similarity of his “T” to the chariots in the *Triumphs*. Not only are the slightly naïve perspective and gold decoration alike, but the figures outlined in black on a gray ground look very close to those decorating the chariots of Love and Chastity.

Several art historians who have looked at the Kress *Triumphs* at the Conservation Center have commented on the relatively high quality of the chariots and columns in contrast to charming, but less accomplished human figures. This skill with shell gold coupled with the Kress painter’s fascination with minute detail have led some scholars to wonder if he was not perhaps a miniaturist. However, Professor Alexander has pointed out that there is very little evidence to document illuminators working as furniture painters,⁵⁰ although there is at least the one instance of Apollonio di Giovanni’s Petrarch illuminations.

My attribution is, of course, highly speculative. From “Mantegna Follower” we could only say, slightly more specifically, “Girolamo da Cremona Follower.” A definite attribution may not be possible for the Kress panels. The difficulty is not surprising when we read, in *Delle Arti e degli Artefici di Mantova*, Carlo d’Arco’s compilation of thirty(!) names of pupils and assistants to Andrea Mantegna culled from documents in the Mantua archives. This list consists only of artists for whom no work is known and does not include, for example, Mantegna’s son Francesco or Francesco Buonsignori.⁵¹

PART IV: THE RELATIONSHIP TO
ANDREA MANTEGNA

In addition to the question of attribution, scholars since Wastler have puzzled over Andrea Mantegna's relationship to this Petrarch cycle. Although the panels possess a certain Mantegnesque style that was influencing artists throughout northern Italy, could there really be any direct connection between the court painter and the delightful but somewhat naïve Kress paintings? Yet, there may have been a relationship between the Kress paintings and the Petrarchan theater decorations described in the letter by Sigismondo Cantelmo (see Appendix).

There are numerous records documenting *trionfi* painted for the Gonzaga, especially for the Marchese Francesco II (born 1466, reigned 1484–1519), and some scholars have argued that the Kress paintings and the Graz ivories must be based on one of these lost cycles.⁵² Francesco Buonsignori wrote to Francesco II in an undated letter concerning a *Triumph of Fame*.⁵³ In a 1493 letter Niccolò da Verona discussed a “*trionfo*” he had painted for Francesco.⁵⁴ Perhaps the most important reference is in a 1491 letter to Francesco from Bernardo Ghisolfi, the supervisor of the decoration at the new palace at Marmirolo. Ghisolfi wrote, “Francesco and Tondo have begun to paint the Triumphs on canvas like Andrea Mantegna. They say that as a result they do them more quickly and that they will be more beautiful and durable . . .”⁵⁵ Tondo has not been identified, but since Francesco Mantegna was known to have worked at Marmirolo, most scholars have assumed that “Francesco” refers to Andrea's son.⁵⁶ Wastler and Furlan both believed that the 1491 canvas paintings might have been a lost Petrarch cycle. Since there are letters concerning transporting “*trionfi*” from Gonzaga to Mantua in 1503, 1505, and 1507 and from Marmirolo to Mantua in 1507 to serve as temporary theater decorations,⁵⁷ it has been argued that the *Triumphs* Cantelmo saw in 1501 were also from Marmirolo and by Francesco Mantegna. Cantelmo clearly stated, however, that the Petrarch *Triumphs* were painted by the same artist who painted the *Triumphs of Caesar*:

one of the areas was decorated with six paintings of the triumphs of Caesar by the hand of the exceptional Mantegna . . . Around the stage on the lower pediment (or decorative façade?) were the *Triumphs* of Petrarch also by the hand of the painter Mantegna . . .⁵⁸

Furthermore, it seems quite likely that the Marmirolo *Triumphs* that Ghisolfi mentioned in 1491 actually depicted the triumphs of Alexander the Great. The Bolognese antiquarian and naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi described the castle of Marmirolo in his *Itineraria Mantuae* written between 1561 and 1571. He mentioned seeing an “*Aula magna depicta cum historia triumphi Alexandri Magni ab Ecc. ti Mantegna*.”⁵⁹

While we cannot rule out the possibility that the Petrarch *Triumphs* seen by Cantelmo were by Francesco or another one of Mantegna's pupils, it does not seem possible to associate them with the *Triumphs* being painted in 1491 in Marmirolo. It is even possible that Andrea Mantegna himself painted Cantelmo's Petrarch cycle. In either event, a set of Petrarch *Triumphs* would imply the possibility of sketches and designs. These designs could have found their way to the hands of both the carver of the Graz ivories and the painter of the Kress cycle. Given the Kress artist's insecurities with the figure and perspective, it seems hard to argue, however, that Mantegna was directly involved in supervising him. We are ultimately left with questions about the relationship of a major artist like Andrea Mantegna to the numerous second-tier artists, craftsmen, and decorators employed by the courts and about the relationship of those craftsmen to each other.

CONCLUSION

The Kress paintings seem to have formed part of a body of Petrarch cycles painted for domestic interiors. Given their dimensions, damage patterns, and perspectival construction, they were more likely *spalliera* paintings than *cassoni* frontals. Unfortunately, it is impossible to know the type of furniture for which they provided the backs.

The panels were probably commissioned by the Gonzaga for a Sforza–Gonzaga marriage.

Given the similarities between the hand in the 1461–68 *Missal* and the Kress painter, the earlier Sforza–Gonzaga engagement between Gian Galeazzo and Susanna/Dorotea seems the more likely candidate for the commission. They may have been painted by someone in the circle of Girolamo da Cremona and might be loosely based on designs by Andrea Mantegna or one of his pupils, but the master could not have directly supervised their execution.

Further research on dowries and trousseaus for Gonzaga brides could be done in the Mantua archives. An examination of extant records of Gonzaga wedding festivities might also be useful. Although this paper raises more questions than provides answers, it contributes to the study of domestic painting in northern Italy and in its courtly society, a subject that is seldom addressed given the paltry amount of furniture that has survived.

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NOTES

1. Trapp (1992–93), p. 40.
2. Shapley (1968), pp. 27–8.
3. No information could be found on this palazzo. There was also a Palazzo Colloredo in Mantua (now the Palazzo di Giustizia) built in the 1620s by the architect A.M. Viani. It belonged to the Gonzaga until 1721 when it was transferred by marriage to the counts of Colloredo. The palazzo remained in the Colloredo family until the first half of the nineteenth century. Marani and Perina (1965), p. 196, n. 81. It is possible that the Kress cycle was in Mantua until the early nineteenth century and then was transferred to the Colloredo castle in Udine.

4. Shapley (1968), pp. 27–8.
5. Wastler (1880), p. 71.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 61–2, 72.
7. Schubring (1915), p. 358.
8. Shapley (1968), p. 27.
9. Carandente (1963), p. 94.
10. Furlan (1973), pp. 81–90.
11. Schubring (1915), pp. 357–8. The Graz chests—now reliquaries containing relics of Saints Martin, Vincent, Maxentia, and Agatha—were given by Pope Paul v to Archduke Ferdinand II in 1617. Coudenhove-Erthal (1931), p. 9.
12. Carandente (1963), pp. 57–9.
13. Schubring (1915), pp. 271, 279.
14. Callmann (1974), p. 60.
15. Carandente (1963), pp. 67–8.
16. Barriault (1994), pp. 67–8.
17. Schubring (1915), p. 294.
18. Callmann (1974), Appendix.
19. Molfino and Natale (1991), pp. 226–9.
20. The X-radiographs are on file at the Conservation Center. It is not known when they were originally cut into six separate pieces. Joseph Wastler described seeing six paintings in 1880, p. 63.
21. Schiaparelli (1908), pp. 159–60.
22. Vidas (1997) p. 41.
23. Barriault (1994), p. 57.
24. Coudenhove-Erthal (1931), p. 16.
25. Ellen Callmann, personal communication, 1998.
26. “*uno paio di forzieri e per una spalliera e per la predella . . .*” Callmann (1988), p. 9. The difference between *cassoni*, *forzieri*, and *coffani* is not clear although Peter Thornton thought that the distinction might be based on shape. “*Cassone*” tends to be used as a generic term by most current scholars. Thornton (1991), pp. 192–3.
27. Callmann (1988), pp. 6, 16.
28. “*Una spalliera di braccia XIII et alta braccia 1 1/2 sopra a detti chassone, dipintovi drento la storia della giostra di Lorenzo, con cornicie et colonette messe d’oro.*” Schiaparelli (1908), p. 167.
29. “*uno paio di forzieri colle spalle molto ricche*,” Barriault (1994), p. 38.
30. Pope-Hennessy and Christiansen (1980), p. 29.
31. In 1463 Giuliano da Maiano received payment from Piero degli Alberti for narrative designs for a *lettuccio*, for example. Barriault (1994), p. 29.
32. Honorati (1981), pp. 39–41.
33. Alberici (1969), p. 7.
34. Callmann (1996), p. 363.
35. Thornton (1991), p. 152.
36. Alberici (1969), p. 8.
37. Thornton (1991), pp. 11–12.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 228.
39. Vidas (1997), pp. 41–2.
40. Ganzer (1988), p. 20.
41. Jonathan Alexander, personal communication, 1998.
42. *Ibid.*
43. Coniglio (1967), pp. 66–70, 75.
44. Lightbown (1986), p. 464.
45. Chambers and Martineau (1981), p. 149.
46. Torelli (1920), pp. 37, 51–2.
47. Pastore and Manzoli (1991), p. 122.
48. Hermann (1994), p. 241.

49. Pastore and Manzoli (1991), pp. 167–70.
 50. Jonathan Alexander, personal communication.
 51. D'Arco (1857), pp. 45–8.
 52. D'Essling and Müntz (1902), p. 152; Coudenhove-Erthal (1931), pp. 42–3; and Carandente (1963), p. 94.
 53. Martindale (1979), document 7, p. 182.
 54. *Ibid.*, document 8.
 55. “Francesco e Tondo insieme ancora loro commenzaria a depingere quelli trionfi li quali a lor ge par farli suso tela secondo ha facto mess. Andrea Mantegna et dicono cusi facendo farano più presto et serano più belle e più durabile . . .” D'Arco (1857), p. 30.
 56. Lightbown (1986), p. 142.
 57. Martindale (1979), documents 15–18, 20, pp. 183–4.
 58. “una delle bande era ornata delli sei quadri del Caesaro triumpho per man del singulare Mantengha . . . Dintorno alla scena al frontespizio di basso era li triumphi del Petrarcha, ancor loro penti per man del pN Mantengha . . .” D'Ancona (1971), p. 382.
 59. Franchini et al. (1979), pp. 194–5, 237. Aldrovandi's confusion between Mantegna father and son at a generation's distance seems more probable than Cantelmo's. During Andrea Mantegna's lifetime Cantelmo attended a spectacle displaying the wealth and taste of the Gonzaga, a family very proud of the achievements of their official painter.

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APPENDIX

Letter from S. Cantelmo, 1501
 Published in d'Ancona (1971), pp. 381–3.

Eccellentissimo et unico Sig. Mio Com. Essendo stato lo apparato facto da questo Ill.mo Sig. Marchese sumptuosissimo et meritamente da essere equiperato ad qual se voglia temporaneo theatro delli antiqui o moderni, non dubito V. Ex.a per più vie harà inteso l'essere del spectaculo quale sia stato: non di meno ancor min non voglio mancare dal offitio della mia debita servitù: certificandola scrivo la verità, quantuncha tanta magnificentia ricercasse chi sapesse meglio scrivere, et exprimendo pengere la nobilita et excellentia del prefato spectaculo; la vaghezza del quale con quanta brevità potrò, me sforzarò dimostrare ad V. Ill.ma Sig.a. Era la sua forma quadrangula, protensa alquanto in longitudine: li doi lati l'uno al altro de rimpecto havevano per ciaschuno octo architravi con colonne ben correspondenti et proportionate alla larghezza et alteza de dicti archi: le

base et capitelli pomposissimamente con finissimi colori penti, et de fogliami ornati, representavano alla mente un edificio eterno ed antiquo, pieno de delectatione: li archi con relevo di fiori rendevano prospectiva mirabile: la larghezza di ciascheuno era braza quactro vel cerca: la alteza propozionata ad quella. Dentro nel prospecto eran panni d'oro et alcune verdure, si come le recitationi ricercavano: una delle bande era ornata delli sei quadri del Cesare triumphe per man del singulare Mantengha: li doi altri lati discontro erano con simili archi, ma de numero inferiore, che ciascheuno ne haveva sei. Doj bande era scena data ad actorj et recitatorj: le doe altre erano ad scalini, deputati per le donne et daltro, per todeschi, trombecti et musici. Al jongere del' angulo de un de' grandi et minorj lati, se vedevano quactro altissime colonne colle basi orbiculate, le quali sustentavano quactro venti principali: fra loro era una grocta, benchè facta ad arte, tamen naturalissima: sopra quella era un ciel grande fulgentissimo de varij lumi, in modo de lucidissime stelle, con una artificciata rota de segni, al moto de' quali girava mo il sole, mo la luna nelle case proprie: dentro era la rota de Fortuna con sei tempi: regno, regnavj, regnabo: in mezo resideva la dea aurea con un sceptro con un delphin. Dintorno alla scena al frontespizio da basso era li triumphi del Petrarca, ancor loro penti per man del p.e Mantengha: sopra eran candelierj vistosissimi deaurati tucti: nel mezo era un scudo colle arme per tucto della C.a M.à; sopra l'aquila aurea bicapitata col regno et diadema imperiale: ciascheuno teneva tre doppiere; ad ogni lato era le insegne. Alli doi maiorj, quelle della S.tà de N. S. et quelle della Cesarea Maestà: alli minorj lati quelle del C.o Sig. Re, et quelle della Ill.ma Sig.a da Venetia; tra li archi pendevano poi quelle de V.Ex., quelle del Sig. duca Alberto Alemano: imprese de Sig. Marchese et Sig.a Marchesana: sopra erano più alte statue argentate, aurate et de più colorj metallici, parte tronche, parte integre, che assai ornavano quel loco; poi ultimo era il cielo de panno torchino, stellato con quelli segni che quella sera correvano nel nostro hemisperio . . .

Le recitationi sonno state belle et delectevole: Venere fo Philonico: Sabato il Penulo de Plauto: Domenica lo Hippolito: Lunedì li Adelphi de Terentio, da persone docte recitate optimamente con grandissima voluptà et plausi de spectatorj. Per essere qui Monsignor Loys d' Ars, locumentente dell' Ill.mo Monsig. de Ligni, et non haver viste le doj prime, intendo vogliono un altra volta pure il Philonico. Se ho mancato di questa in alcuna cosa, prestissimo supplirò ad bocca con V.Ex.a; in bona gratia de quella mi recomando. Datum Mantuae Xijj Februarii MD primo.

De V. EX.a
 Servitore et Schiavo
 Sigismondo Cantelmo.

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

- Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, and 10, pp. 98, 101, and 104. Denver Art Museum Collection, Denver, CO, Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation (1961.169.1, 1961.169.2).
 Figs. 5, 6, and 7, p. 102. Coudenhove-Erthal (1931), figs. 3, 5, and 10.
 Fig. 8, p. 103. Courtesy of the Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery, London (F.1947.LF.4).
 Fig. 11, p. 105. Cole (1995), p. 185.
 Figs. 12 and 13, pp. 106 and 107. Pastore and Manzoli (1991), pp. 167 and 169.



Adoration of the Shepherds with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Bartholomew

Sieneese School, ca. 1440

Egg tempera on wood panel

24^{5/8} × 19^{3/4} in. (62.6 × 50.2 cm)

El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso, Texas

1961-6/6 (K-1434)



FIG. 1. *Adoration of the Shepherds with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Bartholomew*, before restoration.



FIG. 2. *Adoration of the Shepherds with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Bartholomew* (fig. 1), after restoration.

A Portable Triptych in El Paso

Dianne Dwyer Modestini

ONE OF THE FINEST and least frequented of the regional Kress Collections is in the old Mexican border town of El Paso. The largest and most profitable of the S.H. Kress five-and-dime emporiums was in El Paso and, in recognition of this fact, the city was designated to receive an extraordinary group of fifty-eight paintings, chosen by Robert Manning, assistant curator at the Kress Foundation, excellent connoisseur and loyal son of Texas.¹ The quality of the El Paso collection is even more remarkable because it was the penultimate collection to be allocated, opening in 1960, a telling indication of the richness and depth of the Kress reserves even at that late date when the collections in Washington and seventeen other Regional Collections had already been formed.

The collection consists primarily of Italian and Spanish masters and also includes three fine portraits by Van Dyck, Rigaud, and Largillière. The Sienese School is represented by a damaged but genuine *Madonna and Child* by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, a Giovanni di Paolo *Assumption of the Virgin*,² and a perfectly preserved *Madonna and Child with Saints and Angels* by Sano di Pietro, comparable in quality to the National Gallery of Art's, in its original frame and finely finished on the reverse with a gilded and tooled emblem of San Bernardino. Among the Sienese works is an ornate portable triptych (figs. 1 and 2), which had over the years been attributed to Sassetta, the Osservanza Master, Giovanni di Paolo, Pellegrino di Mariano, and Sano di Pietro.³ With this lack of consensus, it was finally catalogued simply as Sienese School, circa 1440, exhibited at

the National Gallery of Art from 1951 to 1956 and ultimately given to El Paso.

The central panel of the portable triptych has a particularly elaborate representation of the Adoration of the Shepherds, and is surmounted by a separate compartment with the Last Judgment. In the right wing a figure of Saint Bartholomew holds his knife with the Virgin of the Annunciation in the gable, while on the left Saint John the Baptist is seen below the Angel of the Annunciation. The reverse sides of the wings are painted in faux porphyry inside an earth-green border with medallions enclosing drawings of the Madonna on the left and the Crucified Christ on the right executed in lead white and red earth on a yellow ochre field (figs. 3 and 4). The moldings are original, although the tips of the crockets of the central pinnacle are broken. X-radiography reveals holes for the dowels that originally fixed the central panel to a base, now lost.

In the early nineteenth century, the painting was recorded in the collection of Max Chabrière-Arles in Lyons before it was acquired by Harold I. Pratt of New York.⁴ While in the Pratt Collection, it was exhibited in the Loan Exhibition of Italian Primitives, at the Kleinberger Galleries in New York in November 1917, catalogued by Osvald Siren and M. W. Brockwell as Sassetta⁵ and in the 1939 New York World's Fair Exhibition, number 350, catalogued by G.H. McCall, again as Sassetta.⁶ It was bought by Wildenstein and exhibited in *Italian Paintings*, 1947, catalogue number 24, as Sano di Pietro.⁷

Attributions to the Master of the Osservanza provoke the most contentious arguments⁸ in the study of fifteenth-century Siennese painting. The intricate and often contradictory art historical vicissitudes of this artist or group of painters, first identified by Roberto Graziani in 1948 following a suggestion of Roberto Longhi,⁹ and named after a tripartite altarpiece in the Church of the Osservanza near Siena, arise not only from the total lack of documentation about this gifted painter but also from inconsistencies in the body of work assigned to him. The critical history has



FIG. 3. *Adoration of the Shepherds with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Bartholomew* (fig. 1), reverse of side panels before restoration.



FIG. 4. *Adoration of the Shepherds with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Bartholomew* (fig. 1), reverse of the side panels after restoration.

been succinctly summarized recently by Cecilia Alessi¹⁰ in the *Grove Dictionary of Art*:

Longhi recognized that two triptychs, formerly attributed to Sassetta, were the work of another hand. The Virgin and Child with SS Jerome and Ambrose (Siena, Osservanza) and the Birth of the Virgin (Asciano, Mus. A. Sacra), formerly in the Collegiata, Asciano, both have a stylistic affinity with Sassetta's works but, in terms of narrative expression, still belong to the Late Gothic tradition. Longhi observed that a further group of paintings was closely related to these works. This included the predella of the Osservanza Altarpiece (Siena, Pin. N., 216), a predella of St Bartholomew (Siena, Pin. N.), scenes of the Passion (Rome, Pin. Vaticana; Philadelphia, PA, Mus. A.; Cambridge, MA, Fogg) and the scenes from the Life of St Anthony Abbot (dispersed; e.g. panels in Washington, DC, N.G.A.; New York, Met.; Wiesbaden, Mus. Wiesbaden) previously also attributed to Sassetta. These last panels are difficult to integrate into the group. The full-length painting of St Anthony Abbot (Paris, Louvre), which scholars have attempted to integrate with the small scenes from the saint's life into a multipartite altarpiece, seems to come from another altarpiece.

Graziani named the painter the Master of the Osservanza after the altarpiece in that church and reconstructed his oeuvre around this work, ranging between the Pietà with St Sebaldus and a Devotee (Siena, Monte Dei Paschi priv. col.), datable 1432–3, and the painted cover of the Gabella (tax records) showing the Archangel Michael (Siena, Pal. Piccolomini, Archv Stato), dated 1444. Graziani proposed that the Master took as his models Giovanni da Milano, Gregorio di Cecco and Masolino, thereby combining Siennese and Florentine stylistic elements. Graziani's theory was accepted by Zeri, Carli, Volpe, Laclotte, Benati, Angelini and Christiansen.

A different theory was proposed by Berenson, who suggested that the Master's oeuvre was the early work of Sano di Pietro, known to have been active from 1428 but whose earliest dated work is the Gesuati Polyptych of 1444 (Siena, Pin. N.). This was accepted by Brandi (1949), Pope-Hennessy (1956), Torriti and Boskovits.

A third hypothesis was put forward by Alessi and Scapecchi (1985). They established that the Osservanza panel was painted for S Maurizio, Siena, and that the date on the painting, 1436, refers to the foundation of the chapel by its patron, the grocer Manno d'Orlando (d 1442), and not necessarily to the year in which the altarpiece was painted. They suggested that the Osservanza Altarpiece and the Birth of the Virgin date from the late 1440s and that the Master was active from the 1440s to the 1470s and was influenced by developments in Florentine painting of that date, particularly by Fra Angelico and Uccello. They further proposed that the Master could be identified with Francesco di Bartolomeo Alfei, a well-documented artist who was associated with Sano di Pietro but whose work has not been identified. While Pope-Hennessy (1987) did not accept the identification of the Master with Alfei, he accepted Alessi's and Scapecchi's attribution of additional works to the Master. These include the Virgin and Child (New York, Met.) and two paintings of the Virgin of Humility (Altenburg, Staatl. Lindenau-Mus.; New York, Brooklyn Mus. A.).

The El Paso triptych is mentioned only a few times in the literature on Sassetta and the Master of the Osservanza. Its location is often incorrectly described, and it has not been illustrated in any publication about Sassetta or his followers.¹¹ Since my first visit to El Paso, I have been intrigued by this delightful object, particularly by the fanciful depiction of the Adoration of the Shepherds, and in the course of my travels, I have had occasion to compare it with the generally accepted works by the Osservanza Master and Sano di Pietro. At some point I focused on an unusual punch mark common to most of the small-scale works of the painter called the Osservanza Master but not used by Sano di Pietro after he became an independent artist, beginning in 1444 with the signed and dated altarpiece of the Gesuati.

An opportunity to study the work closely came in 1999, when it arrived at the Conservation Center to have a broken hinge replaced and a treacly varnish removed. It was encased in a shadow box, which had been manufactured for

it in the 1950s,¹² shortly after its acquisition by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. Professor Mina Gregori, confirming my long-held belief, immediately attributed it to the Osservanza Master.¹³ This publication seemed an opportune vehicle to present the results of my examination and, above all, provide good reproductions of the El Paso painting alongside four other portable triptychs which have all, at one time or another, been attributed to the Master of the Osservanza.

The central panels of the other four triptychs represent the Madonna and Child, while the wings, like κ-1434, bear standing saints with annunciation figures in the gables. They are in the collections of the Pinacoteca of Siena, the Chigi-Saracini Collection, the Diocesan Museum of Pienza, and the Rijksmuseum Meermanno-Westreenianum in The Hague. Longhi's famous 1940 footnote¹⁴ mentions the two Siena triptychs, and Graziani writing in 1948¹⁵ dates the first two to around the time of the *Birth of the Virgin* from Asciano, and accepts the Meermanno-Westreenianum triptych as rather later, after 1440, and under the influence of Vecchietta. The El Paso work is not mentioned, and Graziani seems not to have been aware of its existence.

The attribution of the Saint Anthony series is as convoluted as that of the five triptychs. Initially they were given to Sassetta, and then, by Longhi and Graziani, to the Osservanza Master. Pope-Hennessy (1956) postulates that the panels are the work of three different painters.¹⁶ 'Artist A' is Sassetta himself, entirely responsible for the Berlin *Mass* and collaborator with 'Artist B,' his assistant, on other panels from the series. 'Artist B' may be one of Graziani's candidates for the undocumented Master of the Osservanza, Vico di Luca, who is also the author of the *Passion predellas*, the "Pratt Triptych" (by that time in Washington), and the Meermanno-Westreenianum triptych. A third figure, 'Artist C,' is Sano di Pietro, and to him Pope-Hennessy assigns the Osservanza and Asciano altarpieces, the *Serristori Pietà*, and "three interrelated triptychs in the Siena gallery (no. 177), the Chigi-Saracini Collection and the Museo d'Arte Sacra at Pienza."



FIG. 5. *Annunciation to the Shepherds*, Sano di Pietro, after 1450, tempera on wood panel, 21 1/4 × 27 1/8 in. (54 × 69 cm). La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena, Siena.

In 1957 Enzo Carli published his essential monograph, *Sassetta and the Maestro dell'Osservanza*,¹⁷ revising Graziani's dating (and his own initial notion). Arguing that the Asciano Altarpiece depends from Sassetta's scenes from the life of Saint Francis in the Borgo San Sepolcro Altarpiece (1437–44), he assigns also to this period the triptychs 177 of the Siena Pinacoteca and the Chigi-Saracini Collection. Carli agrees with Graziani that the Meermanno-Westreenianum triptych is of a slightly later date. Equivocating over the dating of the Saint Anthony panels, he argues for an Osservanza Master still under the influence of Sassetta's *Arte della Lana* altarpiece, that is between 1426 and 1432, and sees the hands of two different artists where Pope-Hennessy saw three. However Carli rejected the Vico di Luca hypothesis stating, "I wouldn't be surprised if Artist B is early Sano di Pietro and some day it might be proven."¹⁸ He excludes the Pienza triptych from the oeuvre of the Osservanza Master, considering it by an inferior hand, and gives "the charming triptych from the Pratt Collection, New York (sic)" to the same painter whom he baptizes the "Master of Pienza," noting the influence of Giovanni di Paolo in the figure of Saint John the Baptist. In a meandering and inconclusive rumination about the scene of the

Annunciation to the Shepherds in the El Paso triptych he compares it to:

the enchanting panel No. 262 in the Pinacoteca of Siena [fig. 5] a work by Sano di Pietro [for which] one could consider a date of around 1450; but the reverse is more likely—that Sano based his work on that of the Master of Pienza.

Referring to this painting by Sano di Pietro, which measures 54 × 69 cm, Piero Torriti writes:

Not a work of refined execution, in fact, one would have to say that it was rather *grossolana* (and perhaps for this reason later than the traditional dating of 1450) but of great fascination because of the extraordinary interpretation of the event: in the center, closed in a paddock, is a group of hairy black and white sheep, crowded one against the other in such a way that the flock becomes simply a black and white patch. The



FIG. 6. *Saint Anthony Tempted by Gold*, Master of the Osservanza, mid-1430s, tempera on wood panel, 18³/₄ × 13⁵/₈ in. (47.6 × 34.6 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.

shepherds, with their great winter mantels, are warming themselves, and ecstatically greeting the sudden apparition of the angel in a cloud of gold against the blue sky. Over the barren and gray landscape of the *crete senesi*, punctuated by only a few trees, a red turreted city sprouts, rendering even more magical the idea of the apparition.¹⁹

While not an exact copy, the composition clearly, as Carli observed, derives from the El Paso painting: the angel, the cloud of gold (in our case real gold leaf and not yellow paint), the flock of black and white sheep in their enclosure, the magical turreted towns scattered about, the same type of dog. Unfortunately Carli neither reproduces the El Paso triptych nor follows this intriguing line of reasoning about its charming landscape background which, both stylistically and technically, is closely related to the fanciful and much admired landscape in the background of *Saint Anthony Tempted by Gold* in the Lehman Collection (fig. 6).

Cecilia Alessi and Pietro Scapecechi²⁰ argue that the two portable triptychs that Carli assigned to the Master of Pienza (ours and the Pienza triptych), are in fact by the Master of the Osservanza, painted around 1445 and reflecting the influence of Sassetta's Borgo San Sepolcro Altarpiece; they point out the similar figures of the two lateral saints in both triptychs.²¹ Dr. Alessi, in a verbal communication, pointed out the strong influence of Giovanni di Paolo, to whom the young artist may have been apprenticed, indicating that, according to her reconstruction, it is among the earliest of his works.

Finally, Keith Christiansen noted: “perhaps most illuminating are four small portable triptychs in the Pinacoteca Nazionale and the Chigi-Saracini Collection, Siena; the Museo della Cattedrale, Pienza; and the Rijksmuseum Meermanno-Westreenianum, The Hague.”²² For the fifth portable triptych, *The Adoration of the Shepherds with Saints John and Bartholomew* in the Kress Collection in El Paso, Christiansen followed Carli in attributing it, together with the Pienza triptych, to a different hand, the same one responsible for the predella with scenes from the life of the Virgin in the Vatican. While the Pienza and El



FIG. 7. *Madonna and Child with Saint Catherine of Alexandria and Saint Peter*, Follower of Sassetta, 1460/70, tempera on wood panel, 19 × 16 1/2 in. (48.2 × 41.9 cm) including molding. Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS.

Paso triptychs are clearly by the same hand, especially evident in the lateral wings, it is difficult to connect either of them to the Vatican predellas, which, at least to this viewer, are instead stylistically closely related to the painter of the portable triptych in the Spencer Museum of Art in Lawrence, Kansas²³ (fig. 7), another in the Siena Pinacoteca, number 158, a *Madonna of Humility* flanked by Saint Catherine on the right and Saint John the Baptist on the left, attributed to an unknown painter working in the middle of the fifteenth century, and perhaps the Vatican *Scenes from the Life of the Virgin*. The Kansas triptych, presently catalogued as Follower of Sassetta, has been attributed to Pellegrino di Mariano by Fiocco, Longhi, Suida, Venturi, tentatively by Berenson, and by Pope-Hennessy to a follower of Sassetta who shows some influence of Pellegrino di Mariano.

In summation, the El Paso triptych has been attributed unequivocally to the Osservanza Master

by Alessi and Scapecchi. Pope-Hennessy appears to have held the same view as he assigned this work to 'Artist B,' possibly Vico di Luca, Sassetta's assistant in the *Death of Saint Anthony* and the same painter responsible for the five Passion predellas, implicitly assigning the El Paso work to the artist or group of artists now accepted as the Osservanza Master. Carli and Christiansen consider both the El Paso triptych and the one in Pienza to be by a different hand called the "Master of Pienza," although they do not concur about other works assigned to this artist.

Let us for a moment turn our attention to the five triptychs under discussion.

1. TRIPTYCH 177, PINACOTECA DI SIENA (FIG. 8)

The central panel depicts the Madonna and Child seated on a cushion. Four angels hold a cloth of honor, once silver leafed, as was the Madonna's robe. Over her dress the blue mantle covers her head and cascades from a clasp at the neck. In the pinnacle is a figure of Christ Blessing. An attenuated figure of Saint John the Baptist occupies the right wing with the Virgin of the Annunciation, seated on the ground, in the gable above, while on the left is Saint Catherine of Alexandria, in a dress that was once silver leaf, surmounted by the Angel of the Annunciation who leans back in a somewhat awkward pose in order to fit into the triangular space. Both saints stand on marbled floors. The moldings are battered but original, as are the hinges. Each compartment has three crockets per edge and a finial. There is no base. The wings are well preserved though covered with grime and discolored varnish. The central panel has suffered: the azurite robe of the Madonna has many losses, the foreground is illegible, and the Child is severely scarred, while the head of the Madonna, the angels, and the Blessing Christ are all well preserved as is the gold ground throughout. The punch work, though simple, is finely executed. Four different punches are used: a rosette, two circle punches of different sizes, and an odd punch, an imperfectly cut diamond or quatrefoil

shape, slightly longer than it is wide that could perhaps best be described as an irregular mandorla. The garments of the angels are sgraffitoed, making a pattern with the underlying gold ground. Unfortunately it was not possible to see the back of the doors.

2. THE CHIGI-SARACINI TRIPTYCH (FIG. 9)

The central panel depicts the Madonna seated in a three-quarter pose similar to that of the Siena triptych 177, but her head, with elaborately braided hair, is uncovered, and she holds a leaping Child against a white cloth. Four angels stand slightly behind her in attitudes of prayer, while in the cusp, a figure of God the Father emerges from a starry firmament. The floor is covered with a carpet of oriental design. John the Baptist, nearly a twin to the figure in the Siena Pinacoteca, and a Virgin of the Annunciation above, seated on a bench but otherwise similar to number 177, occupy the right wing. On the left, a monastic saint, later replaced by a figure of Saint Catherine, was once depicted below the Angel of the Annunciation, a different model this time, slightly smaller in scale, with elegantly designed raised wings, better adapted to the space. Both saints stand on marbled floors. As expected, the azurite robe of the Madonna has suffered, and there are numerous scattered losses to the foreground of the central panel making it barely legible; of the monk in the left wing only traces remain. The painting has recently been cleaned and restored. The carpentry is identical to the Siena triptych and, of the five, this is the only one which retains its original base. Apart from some flaked losses in the central panel, the gold ground is well preserved, the punch work finely executed and only slightly more elaborate than number 177. The same four punches are used in a different variation and there is a fifth punch, a small star (also used by Sano di Pietro, see below), identical to one used in the Saint Anthony series along the top of the uppermost panel and which also occurs in the Asciano Altarpiece. The reverse of the doors is faux porphyry with a green earth border.



FIG. 8. *Madonna and Child with Saint Catherine of Alexandria and Saint John the Baptist*, No. 177, Master of the Osservanza, tempera on wood panel, $21\frac{7}{8} \times 18\frac{1}{4}$ in. (55.5 × 46.5 cm). La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena, Siena.



FIG. 9. *Madonna and Child with Saint Francis and Saint John the Baptist*, Master of the Osservanza, tempera on wood panel, $25 \times 21\frac{5}{8}$ in. (63.5 × 55 cm). Collezione Chigi-Saracini, Siena.



FIG. 10. *Madonna and Child with Saint Catherine of Alexandria and Saint John the Baptist*, Pienza, tempera on wood panel, 25 1/4 x 23 1/4 in. (64 x 59 cm). Museo Diocesano, Pienza.



FIG. 11. *Madonna and Child with Saint Catherine of Alexandria and Saint John the Baptist* (fig. 10), reverse of side panels.

3. PIENZA TRIPTYCH (FIG. 10)

A Madonna of Humility seated on a beautifully preserved oriental carpet occupies the central panel. Again she is seen in three-quarter view, but facing right rather than left. A Christ Blessing surrounded by half figures of angels and prophets hovers above. The right wing depicts Saint Catherine of Alexandria dressed in an elaborately worked gown of sgraffitied and incised gold and painted decoration. Saint John the Baptist is on the left, facing left and in a slightly different pose than in the other two triptychs. The Angel of the Annunciation is similar to that of the Chigi-Saracini Altarpiece, while the Virgin is of a different type than in the other two paintings, more elegant with finer garb. Again, the carpentry is identical. The gold ground is well preserved, and we observe the same punches: the rosette, the irregularly cut mandorla, and two circle punches of different sizes. Of the three described thus far, this painting is the best preserved. The reverse of the wings are decorated with faux porphyry with an elegant central geometric design (fig. 11). The base is modern.

4. THE HAGUE TRIPTYCH (FIG. 12)

In the central compartment the Madonna is posed in three-quarter view on a draped throne facing right. She is flanked by Saint Catherine of Alexandria on the left and a female saint on the right, possibly Saint Lucy.²⁴ Two angels stand in prayer behind the throne and a figure of God the Father is in the gable above. The Christ Child holds a scroll with the word "EGO." A carpet of similar design to that in the Pienza triptych covers the floor. Saint Ansanus, one of Siena's patron saints, stands in the left wing holding the *balzana* in his right hand. Saint Lawrence with his grill occupies the right wing, and the Angel and Virgin of the Annunciation are in their customary positions in the left and right gables, respectively, of the wings. The angel is the same figure used in the Pienza triptych, while the Virgin is rather solemn, seated on a bench in a simple painted interior suggesting a loggia. The carpentry is identical to the other three triptychs. The backs of the wings



FIG. 12. *Madonna and Child with Saint Catherine of Alexandria and a Female Saint*, Attributed to the Master of the Osservanza, tempera on wood panel, $24 \times 20\frac{7}{8}$ in. (61 × 53 cm). Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum, The Hague.

are painted to resemble porphyry, and each has a painted shell in the center, which may refer to the Sienese district, the *Contrada di Nicchio*. Two holes bored into the wood of the central panel suggest dowels for a base such as that still retained by the Chigi-Saracini triptych. The gold background is well preserved. None of the costumes displays the elaborate Sassettesque sgraffito and incising of the gold that are an important feature in the other triptychs. The punches used are also somewhat different: a Gothic arch motif along the borders, one circle punch, and the familiar rosette. The punching is slightly irregular in places and suggests an unsure hand.

5. THE EL PASO TRIPTYCH (see figs. 1, 2, 3, and 4) The subject of the central panel is a complex scene representing the Adoration of the Shepherds and the Annunciation to the Shepherds set in a fully developed landscape that recalls the one around San Leonardo al Lago, the buildings on

the island in the lake similar to those depicted in the Lehman *Saint Anthony* with a slight resemblance to the hermitage itself.²⁵ In the foreground the Madonna sits in front of the manger with Saint Joseph behind and to her right. Over the newborn Child, Christ's "xp" monogram hovers accompanied by six cherubim with the Holy Spirit below. The ox and ass are represented on the far left, and a saddle and a double pouch of linen decorated with red embroidery rest on the ground. Three shepherds stand to the right of Saint Joseph, accompanied by a small white sheepdog. At the extreme right behind the shepherds is a city gate. On the hillside beyond, on a smaller scale, the same three shepherds and their sleeping dog gather around the comfort of a fire fashioned of painted and sgraffitooed gold leaf, gazing towards the heavens at an angel in a golden nimbus wrought, like the fire, in gold leaf, painted and sgraffitooed. Black and white sheep occupy a pen enclosed by white lattice. A crane looms large in contrast to the small trees. A red bridge crosses a stream, and the dark blue sky is streaked with white clouds over the distant hills. It is a composition of infinite refinement and is the scene that so impressed Carli and Torriti. Sano di Pietro later borrowed it for his much larger and coarser panel of around 1450 in the Pinacoteca of Siena (see fig. 5).²⁶

The upper compartment is unique to this triptych, otherwise the carpentry of the moldings and the crockets are the same as in the other four. This unusual element depicts a miniature Last Judgment complete with trumpeting angels, souls rising from their graves, and vicious devils prodding the damned into their ghastly realm. The figure of Christ would seem to derive from Sassetta's *Last Supper*, part of the dismembered *Arte della Lana* altarpiece.

The pose of the Virgin of the Annunciation (fig. 13) is a direct quote—with the exception of the position of the hands—from the *Pala dell'Osservanza* (fig. 14), but set into rose and white marble domestic architecture with a plaid bed cover and a glimpse of a garden in the distance. The angel is a new variation from those in the



FIG. 13. *Adoration of the Shepherds with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Bartholomew* (fig. 1), detail of the Virgin Annunciate.



FIG. 14. *Pala dell'Osservanza*, Master of the Osservanza, tempera on wood panel. Church of the Osservanza, Siena, Italy. Detail of the Virgin Annunciate.

other triptychs and occupies the ample space with great conviction. The robes are elaborately worked in sgraffitoed brocade; the pricked fabric, which also comes from Sassetta, and a charming detail of a gilded vase with flowers fills an empty corner.

As already stated, old dowel holes at the bottom indicate a lost base. The backs of the doors are painted in fictive porphyry with central medallions containing small sketches of the Mater Dolorosa and the Crucified Christ. When closed the gable with its scene of the Last Judgment projects above the doors.

There are technical and stylistic differences among the five portable triptychs. The two in Siena, in Palazzo Chigi-Saracini and in the Pinacoteca, are somewhat more refined, with minute and carefully integrated brushwork, pale flesh tones, and sweet facial types resembling Sassetta's early work. This style also characterizes the predella of the Osservanza Altarpiece and the smaller scenes of the Asciano *Birth of the Virgin*.

The facial types in the Hague triptych are more closely related to these two triptychs, although not as finely executed. The Pienza and the El Paso triptychs are clearly related stylistically and technically and admittedly are populated by more swarthy figures dominated by a dark *verdaccio* underpaint in the flesh tones, and executed with coarse brushwork, at times summarily applied. This style can also be observed in some of the predellas of the Passion series, particularly in the Vatican *Flagellation*, and in the panels of the Saint Anthony series. The figures in the *Death of the Saint*, *Saint Anthony Distributing his Wealth to the Poor* (National Gallery of Art, Washington) (fig. 15) and *Saint Anthony Tempted by the Devil in the Guise of a Woman* (Yale University Art Gallery) are all close cousins of the shepherds (fig. 16) in the El Paso triptych and are not painted with more refinement. Nor would *Saint Anthony Tempted by Gold* find himself out of place in the El Paso painting, and, as has already been pointed out, the landscape,



FIG. 15. *Saint Anthony Distributing his Wealth to the Poor*, Master of the Osservanza, tempera on wood panel, 18 ⁵/₈ × 13 ⁵/₈ in. (47.5 × 34.5 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Detail.



FIG. 16. *Adoration of the Shepherds with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Bartholomew* (fig. 1), detail.

technically and in the poetry of its invention, is closely related to the Lehman panel. The water (figs. 17 and 18) for example, in both panels is a dark brownish green that might be mistaken for earth were it not for the bridge and the boat. Close examination shows it to have a pale blue underpaint and what would have been a translucent bright green copper resinat glaze, now altered. Because it is painted in a different medium, the water in the Cambridge miniature of the *Burial of Saint Monica and Saint Augustine Departing for Africa* gives some idea of the original appearance of similar passages in the other two panels.

The Berlin *Saint Anthony at Mass* is superior in perspective and execution to the other panels of the Saint Anthony series, and as Pope-Hennessy observed, very close to Sassetta himself, with its sophisticated lost profiles and the delicate tempera hatching in the lapis lazuli drapes of the officiating priest. Comparing the awkward, reworked, and unsuccessfully rendered tile floor in the *Death of the Virgin* (Villa I Tatti), a compartment of the Asciano Altarpiece, with the perfect realization of the patterned floor in the Berlin painting, it is hard to believe that the same painter was responsible for both works.



FIG. 17. *Saint Anthony Tempted by Gold* (fig. 6), detail of San Leonardo al Lago.



FIG. 18. *Adoration of the Shepherds with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Bartholomew* (fig. 1), detail of San Leonardo al Lago.

It should also be noted that the different states of the various panels of the Saint Anthony series do not allow for comparison on the basis of their palette. Three of the Washington panels are covered with thick coatings of yellowed dammar and shellac, severely distorting the original colors, which are both cooler and more brilliant. This is true to a slightly lesser degree of the *Death of Saint Anthony*, which has a thinner varnish that has significantly discolored since it was applied in the mid-1940s when the painting appeared on the art market. The other panels of the series have all been cleaned in the recent past.

The punch work may have some significance. As already described, the painter of four of the portable triptychs—those in the Pinacoteca of Siena (no. 177), the Chigi-Saracini Collection, the Diocesan Museum in Pienza, and the El Paso Museum of Art—used the same four punches (figs. 19 and 20). Three of them are common designs—the rosette and the two different-sized circles. The fourth punch is an unusual shape



FIG. 19. *Adoration of the Shepherds with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Bartholomew* (fig. 1), detail of punches.

and has been cut unevenly in such a way that it is easily recognizable; this odd shape is difficult to accurately classify but can be described as an irregularly cut mandorla. It is present not only in these four triptychs but also in the predella of the *Pala dell'Osservanza* and is used as an outline for the nimbus of the *Madonna and Child with Four Angels* atop the Asciano Altarpiece. The star punch observed in the Saint Anthony series and the Hague triptych is also used in Asciano. Keith Christiansen has noted that:

a number of the punches employed in tooling the gold in the *Osservanza* altarpiece and in the *Birth of the Virgin* in Asciano recur in the Saint George, the Lehman *Madonna and Child*, and in Sano's signed and dated *Gesuati* altarpiece in the Siena Pinacoteca.²⁷

Both the star punch and the rosette used in Asciano and in the Saint Anthony cycle can be found in other works by Sano di Pietro as late as the 1447 *Madonna and Child with Saints Bartholomew and Lucy*, the 1449 polyptych of Scrofiano where they decorate the mitre and gilded border of Saint Biagio in the predella. Strangely, for what it is worth, in the *Santa Bonda* altarpiece dated between 1450 and 1452 the original rosette punch is used in the predella scenes of the Last Supper and the angels, while a slightly different rosette punch, larger and more accurately cut, is used in some of the other predella scenes. This larger rosette is also used in the altarpiece of Saints Cosmos and Damian from the convent of the Gesuati of San Girolamo.

The irregular mandorla punch seems to be used only in those works that are associated with the *Osservanza* Master, and I have not seen it in any paintings done independently by Sano di Pietro after 1444. However, a similar punch, again, like Sano's new rosette, larger and more regularly cut, can be found in several smaller paintings by Sano di Pietro, such as *The Crucifixion* in Washington.

Another technical feature of some of the small-scale works attributed to the *Osservanza* Master is the presence of significant pentimenti, unusual



FIG. 20. *Adoration of the Shepherds with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Bartholomew* (fig. 1), detail of punches.

in this period. In *The Way to Calvary* (Philadelphia Museum of Art), the building on the right has been painted over a mountain. In *The Death of the Virgin* (I Tatti), the landscape and fence in the background have been moved. In the Pienza triptych there is a pentiment of the robe of the Baptist, as there is in the El Paso triptych, which also has a change in the position of the finger of the right hand (fig. 21) and various other corrections of contours.

As far as the state of the El Paso triptych is concerned, while it is quite well preserved for a painting of this period, it has been slightly abraded in the past. An old varnish or patina can be seen in between some of the thickly clotted paint of the brushwork, especially in the



FIG. 21. *Adoration of the Shepherds with Saint John the Baptist and Saint Bartholomew* (fig. 1), detail of pentimento.

flesh tones; it has been removed from the more prominent areas. The azurite robe of the Madonna has been scraped down and some of the painter's corrections, especially around the ox in the foreground, have flaked off or have been scraped away in the past. The gold leaf is worn in places: the haloes of Saint John, the Madonna and Saint Joseph and, sadly, part of the golden nimbus radiating from the Child, which is also incised and painted. The head of Christ in the medallion on the back of the right door is missing, and the backs of the doors are generally a bit battered. And, as mentioned earlier, the original base is gone. However, much of the altarpiece is in lovely condition, and the decision was made to restore it as completely as possible, including replacing the missing gold with new leaf on a wax mordant. The reverse of the wings were also restored, with the exception of the missing head of Christ, and new hook fasteners, made in imitation of antique ones, were inserted to replace the unsuitable modern brass hinges.²⁸ The central panel had a typical Kress cradle but had not been thinned. This unnecessary secondary support was removed.

Whatever conclusions may be drawn about its authorship, the publication of good color images of this long neglected work will bring it the attention it merits and allow scholars to compare the five triptychs.

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NOTES

1. The extensive Suida-Manning collection is now in the Jack Blanton Museum at the University of Texas, Austin.
2. Part of the *Coronation of the Virgin* altarpiece in the Robert Lehman Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
3. According to Shapley (1966), the portable altarpiece should be dated probably after 1440. It has been attributed to Sassetta (Siren 1917, Van Marle 1927); follower of Sassetta, the Vatican Master, or Vico di Luca (Pope-Hennessy 1956); early Giovanni di Paolo (Berenson 1932); Master of Pienza (Carli 1957 and Zeri 1954; the latter identifies this painter as the Pseudo Pellegrino di Mariano); Sano di Pietro (Volpe 1958, comparing it to an Assumption

- in the Siena Pinacoteca; and Berenson in 1947, verbally, to Wildenstein); Master of the Osservanza (Alessi and Scapecchi 1985); Master of Pienza (Christiansen 1988).
4. Harold Irwin Pratt, Brooklyn, 1877–New York, 1939. The youngest son of Charles Pratt (1830–1891), John D. Rockefeller's partner in Standard Oil of New Jersey, founder of the Pratt Institute. Harold I. Pratt built and lived in a mansion on the southwest corner of Park Avenue and 68th Street donated in 1944 by his widow to the Council on Foreign Relations, of which Pratt had been a member since 1923. The Council converted the residence into offices, meeting rooms, and a library. Presumably the collection was acquired by Wildenstein around the time of Mrs. Pratt's gift, and three paintings were bought by the Kress Foundation: the Sieneese triptych, a *Madonna and Child* by Andrea Solario now in Columbia, South Carolina, and the Piero di Cosimo in Honolulu.
 5. Shapley (1966), p. 147.
 6. Ibid.
 7. The attribution to Sano di Pietro was likely made by Bernard Berenson since he was Wildenstein's expert in that period.
 8. That the problem is still controversial one only has to read Kanter's note in his review of the London National Gallery's new catalogue of fifteenth-century Italian paintings in the February 2004 issue of *The Burlington Magazine*, p. 107: "NG 5114: This panel of the *Birth of the Virgin* (fig. 34) is by Sano di Pietro, not the Osservanza Master. Confusion between these two painters still allows for their identity as a single hand to be entertained as a serious possibility, but is ruled out by their having worked side by side and in distinctive styles and techniques on the St. Anthony Abbot series." In sharp disagreement, Boskovits (2003) attributes all four panels from that same series in the National Gallery of Art, Washington to Sano di Pietro.
 9. Longhi (1975), p. 60.
 10. Turner (1988), pp. 738–40.
 11. *Kress Acquisitions, 1951–1956*, National Gallery of Art, Washington; Fern Rusk Shapley, *The Samuel H. Kress Collection, El Paso Museum of Art*, 1961, cat. no. 5; Shapley (1966). All three illustrations are mediocre quality black and white overall shots.
 12. Invoice from Robert M. Kulicke, Inc., Framemakers, September 30, 1955, where, interestingly, κ-1434 is referred to as Master of Osservanza. It is likely that Mario Modestini believed it to be by that artist since he would have been working directly with Kulicke.
 13. Verbal communication based on her observations in front of the original.
 14. Longhi (1975).
 15. Graziani (1948), pp. 75–88.
 16. Pope-Hennessy (1956).
 17. Carli (1957).
 18. Ibid., in 'Nota' following p. 121.
 19. Torriti (1977), p. 276 (author's translation).
 20. Alessi and Scapecchi (1985).
 21. The rest of their argument has not found acceptance with other scholars. It depends on an interpretation of new archival material about the two patrons who commissioned the Osservanza and Asciano altarpieces.
 22. Christiansen et al. (1988), p. 107
 23. Shapley (1966). κ-444, Follower of Sassetta, *Madonna and Child with Saints*, portable triptych, 19 × 16 1/2 in. (48.2 × 41.9 cm), including the molding. Very good condition. Frame regilded. Given in the past to Pellegrino di Mariano (in ms) by Fiocco, Longhi, Suida, and Venturi; to Pellegrino tentatively by Berenson; school of Sassetta by Perkins. Pope-Hennessy (1939) to follower of Sassetta who had worked in Sassetta's *bottega* and shows some influence of Pellegrino di Mariano. Provenance: Achillito Chiesa, Milan, Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi, Kress, 1936. Exhibited at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. from 1941–52 (fig. 8).
 24. Van Os et al. (1989), p. 127.
 25. The hermitage of San Leonardo al Lago is recorded as early as 1119, and a church existed by 1168. Eventually the church was joined to the Augustinian Order. The Beato Agostino Novello retired to the hermitage and became a cult figure after his death in 1309, and the church prospered. Around 1350 it was rebuilt in the Gothic style, frescoed by Lippo Vanni in 1370 and decorated with other images. In 1366 the hermitage offered refuge to the population of nearby Santa Colomba during a siege and was fortified with a wall and two towers, one round and one square in plan. Giovanni di Paolo painted a Crucifixion for the chapter room, his only fresco. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it was accorded particular reverence as attested by the 1460 papal visit of Pio II. It was once surrounded by water, thus the reference to a lake in its name. Now drained, it stands on a hilltop in the middle of fields of grazing sheep.
 26. The hilltop scene of the *Annunciation to the Shepherds* measures 54 × 69 cm.
 27. Christiansen et al. (1988).
 28. Giovanni Marussich replaced the hinges and removed the cradle.

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PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

- Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, and 21, pp. 112, 114, 122, 123, 124, and 125. El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso, TX, Samuel H. Kress Collection (1961-6/6).
- Figs. 6 and 17, pp. 117 and 123. Photograph ©The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.
- Fig. 7, p. 118. Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, Samuel H. Kress Study Collection (1960.0045).
- Fig. 14, p. 122. Photograph by Scala ©Art Resource, Inc., New York, NY.
- Fig. 15, p. 123. ©National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

1



Scenes from the Life of Virgin, ca. 1480–90
Guidoccio Cozzarelli (Guidoccio di Giovanni di Marco Cozzarelli)
Egg tempera on cradled wood panel
26³/₄ × 21¹/₄ in. (68 × 54 cm)
Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida
61.022.000 (K-1286)



FIG. 1. *Scenes from the Life of the Virgin*, before cleaning and restoration.



FIG. 2. *Scenes from the Life of the Virgin* (fig. 1), after cleaning and restoration.

Guidoccio Cozzarelli's *Scenes from the Life of the Virgin*

Dianne Dwyer Modestini

THIS UNUSUAL COMPOSITION WAS EXHIBITED in "Painting in Renaissance Siena" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1988; on that occasion a number of intriguing questions were raised about its original context. In 1990 the painting was cleaned and restored at the Conservation Center in New York (figs. 1 and 2). As Laurence Kanter noted in the exhibition catalogue, the grain of the wood is vertical, so the painting could not have belonged to a predella but was most likely part of an altarpiece although no related fragments have as yet come to light.¹ The restoration did not yield any information about its position in the altarpiece as all four edges have been cut and narrow wood strips were added to all sides. The fragment is made up of two planks, that on the right measuring approximately 30 cm, a reasonable size for a full board. Taking into consideration the elements of its composition, it could be posited that it belonged on the right edge of an altarpiece.

The painting is generally slightly worn; certain passages, especially the details of the brickwork in the townscape, were freely reinforced during an old restoration.² Despite the wear, the fragment is essentially in good condition for a work of this period, and there can be no question that the foreground architecture is of a piece with the rest. In his catalogue entry Kanter proposed that it was a modern restoration disguising the original appearance as it was recorded in a photograph of the painting while it belonged to R. Langton Douglas.³ As Shapley notes in the Kress catalogue, "the stylized dolphin and vase border at the bottom is unusual in a panel painting but

would be normal in a miniature of the period. Close parallels are offered in some of Cozzarelli's illuminations of 1480–81, now in the Piccolomini Library."⁴ This set of choir books (under discussion are three separate books containing five illustrations by Cozzarelli) was originally commissioned for the Ospedale della Scala from Guidoccio Cozzarelli and Bernardino di Michele Cignoni and includes Antiphonaries 6E, 15Q and 26R with five miniatures by Cozzarelli illustrating the story of *Isaac and Jacob*, the *Assumption*, the *Birth of Saint John the Baptist*, the *Nativity of the Virgin* and *A Bishop Leading a Procession into a Church*.⁵ (Antiphonary 7G incorporates a signed illustration of *Moses and the Burning Bush* by Cignoni whose work consistently demonstrates a hand less refined than Cozzarelli's and a predilection for a different set of decorative motifs.⁶) The border design of dolphins as well as the central column terminating in a dolphin frieze in the page *Isaac Blessing Jacob* (fig. 3) are related to the architectural details in our painting as are similar motifs decorating the border of the *Bishop Leading a Procession into a Church* (fig. 4), while similar treatment of the architecture is seen in two *cassone* panels by Cozzarelli, *The Return of Ulysses* in the Musée de Cluny and *The Legend of Cloelia* in the Metropolitan Museum.

Kanter suggested that the Coral Gables fragment and *The Birth of the Virgin*, illustrated by van Marle while it was in the collection of the Baron Michele Lazzaroni (obviously much repainted by Verzetta, Lazzaroni's restorer,⁷ and later offered for sale by the Galleria Gilberto Algranti, May 5–30, 1971) might be part of the same composition. Kanter's notion is appealing not only because of the markedly similar figure types but also because of the similar treatment of the incised halo of Saint Joseph in our picture and that of Saint Elizabeth in the ex-Lazzaroni painting. If however, as recorded, the Lazzaroni panel measures 67 × 58 cm, then the Coral Gables painting's dimensions, 68 × 54 cm, make this association problematic since there is a notable difference in the scale of the figures—nearly twice as large in the painting formerly in the Lazzaroni Collection in which the figures occupy most of the composition.



FIG. 3. *Isaac Blessing Jacob*, Guidoccio Cozzarelli, tempera on parchment, Biblioteca Piccolomini, Siena.

A curious anomaly in *Scenes from the Life of the Virgin* is the relationship of the existing architecture to a larger composition. It has been suggested, presumably by comparison with Cozzarelli's Pannilini altarpiece *Madonna and Child with Saints Simon and Thaddeus* in San Bernardino in Sinalunga⁸ where the Madonna appears seated on a carved throne placed in front of a dolphin-decorated frieze, that the monumental frieze and pilaster in the Coral Gables painting formed part of a similar throne.⁹ This enticing hypothesis is difficult to sustain since the pilaster sits directly on top of the frieze and in the same plane, while the frieze must continue to complete the dolphin-vase-dolphin motif. It is impossible to imagine how these two elements could become the arms of a presumed throne and would exclude standing saints whose heads would project above the frieze as in the Sinalunga Altarpiece. With the existing information it is only possible to conjecture how these architectural elements developed in the lost altarpiece, but it is more likely that they formed part of an architectural background, a palace or urban scene. This would imply that the principal subject of the altarpiece was not a Madonna and



FIG. 4. *Bishop Leading a Procession into a Church*, Guidoccio Cozzarelli, tempera on parchment, Biblioteca Piccolomini, Siena.

Child but another episode connected with the life of the Virgin, and not a Nativity or Adoration of the Magi which are depicted in rustic settings.

A curious aspect of the painting's technique is worth noting. Both Cozzarelli and his master, Matteo di Giovanni, often used the method of making a complete underpainting in *grisaille* and finishing the painting by glazing over the monochrome rendering with washes of semi-transparent color. The gray appearance of the heads in many of their works is due to the removal in a past cleaning of the delicate pink final layer. In the Coral Gables fragment the final glaze had been much abraded, and an attempt to suggest it was made during the restoration. The worn *affreschi* in the former dining hall or *cenacolo* of Sant'Agostino in Monticiano attributed to Cozzarelli by Cesare Brandi in 1931 demonstrate the artist's affinity for monochrome painting.¹⁰

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NOTES

1. K. Christiansen, L. Kanter and C.B. Strehlke, *Painting in Renaissance Siena, 1420–1500* (exhib. cat.). New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1988, pp. 283–5.
2. The provenance is from Fern Rusk Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection, Vol. 1: Italian Schools, XIII–XV Century* (London, Phaidon, 1966), p. 159. The supposition about the date of the removal of the restoration is my own. Dr. Friedrich Lippmann, Berlin (sold, Rudolph Lepke, Berlin, Nov. 26–27, 1912, catalogue by M.J. Friedländer, No. 35, as Domenico Cozzarelli, bought by Kleinberger); R.L. Douglas, London (purchased, 1922)—exhibited: “Antiquities and Works of Art,” Olympia, London, July 19–August 1, 1928, no. x-21, as Guidoccio Cozzarelli; London market; Contini-Bonacossi, Florence; Kress acquisition, 1939. The misleading classical ruin must have been removed during a restoration done between 1928 and 1939, possibly in Florence by one of Contini-Bonacossi's restorers, before its purchase by Samuel H. Kress.
3. Exhibition Olympia, London, July 19–August 1, 1928, no. x-21.
4. Shapley 1966 (cited in note 2).
5. Raimond Van Marle, *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting*, Vol. xvi. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1937, pp. 368–9.
6. Mario Cignoni, *Bernardino Cignoni, Maestro Miniatore del Rinascimento (Casole d'Elsa 1448/9–Siena 1496)*. Florence: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1996.
7. Van Marle 1937 (cited in note 5), p. 365.
8. Ludwig Pardekooper, “Due famiglie rivali e due pale di Guidoccio Cozzarelli per Sinalunga,” *Prospettiva*, No. 72 (October 1993), pp. 51–65.
9. Shapley 1966 (cited in note 2).
10. *The Crucifixion, The Carrying of the Cross, and The Deposition* (three paintings) attributed to Guidoccio Cozzarelli by Cesare Brandi in 1931, are painted with white and yellow earth monochrome. The background, as Brandi points out, is a red similar to a bole preparation, and the only other color is the red blood flowing from Christ's wounds. Originally published in *Daedalo*, and reprinted in *Lecceto e gli Eremiti Agostiniani in Terra di Siena* (Monte dei Paschi di Siena, 1990), pp. 315–27.

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

Figs. 1 and 2, p. 128. Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL, Samuel H. Kress Collection (61.022.000).



Saint Sebastian

School of Pietro Perugino, ca. 1500

Oil and egg tempera on wood panel, transferred to cradled Masonite panel

29⁷/₈ × 20³/₄ in. (75.9 × 52.7 cm)

Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, New Jersey

(K-1557)



FIG. 1. *Saint Sebastian*, before cleaning and restoration.



FIG. 2. *Saint Sebastian* (fig. 1), after cleaning and restoration.

School of Pietro Perugino, *Saint Sebastian*

Annette Rupprecht & Sheri Francis Shaneyfelt

THE KRESS COLLECTION *Saint Sebastian* (figs. 1 and 2) is clearly executed in the manner of Pietro di Cristoforo Vannucci (Città della Pieve ca. 1450–Fontignano 1523), called Pietro Perugino, since for many years he lived and worked in the city of Perugia.¹ The painting has a distinguished provenance. According to an inscription formerly on the verso it was commissioned by the Oddi family of Perugia:

QUESTO S. SEBASTIANO È STATO DA RAFFAELLO SANZIO DA URBINO
DIPINTO PER I SIGNORI CONTI DEGLI ODDI PERUGIA. I.A.D.S.P.

By 1847 it was in the Edward Solly Collection, London, then bought at Christie's, London, by Lord Northwick, Thirlestane House, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire; in 1873 it was sold through Sir J. Charles Robinson and entered the Cook Collection, Richmond, Surrey from which it was acquired after 1945 by the Florentine dealer and collector Count Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi who sold it to Samuel H. Kress in 1948.

In 1994 the *Saint Sebastian* was requested for loan by the Grand Rapids Art Museum for its upcoming exhibition *Pietro Perugino: Master of the Italian Renaissance*² and the work was sent to the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts of New York University for examination and treatment. Although basically in good condition, the painting had minor flaking requiring consolidation, and the varnish was thick and significantly discolored. While the treatment itself proved straightforward, the technical examination of the painting

prior to its treatment and research at the Kress Archive into its restoration history revealed information that has reopened the discussion of the painting's authorship.

At the time of its acquisition from the Contini-Bonacossi Collection in 1948, this painting was still on its original support, a wood panel with vertically oriented grain that subsequently had been cradled.³ According to Mario Modestini, exposure to excessive humidity during the summer had caused the paint to lift and it was necessary to transfer the paint layer because the glue binder had denatured, causing the gesso preparation to disintegrate to powder.⁴ It was transferred from wood panel to a plain, closed-weave canvas⁵ and marouflaged onto a single piece of Masonite, approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ in. larger than the image in all four directions. The Masonite was then veneered and cradled.

The transfer procedure provided a rare opportunity to view and document the reverse of the paint layer; it clearly revealed an underdrawing of lines incised into the original gesso ground laying out the initial contours of the figure. Photographs recording the incised lines were taken during the treatment. Although the original negatives and photographic prints were missing, we were able to make use of photocopies in the Kress Archives, including an overall image and a detail of the face. Since then, eight of the original negatives have been located in the Department of Image Collections at the National Gallery of Art (fig. 3).⁶ The presence of such incisions indicates that the Sebastian figure was perhaps derived from another image of the saint, possibly from a work by the master Pietro Perugino himself, or from a picture originating in his workshop. Indeed, the use of cartoons in the repetition of particular figures and even entire compositions by Perugino and his numerous collaborators is well accepted by scholars of the Perugino School.⁷

When a diagram of the incisions was reversed and superimposed onto the painted image of the Kress *Saint Sebastian*, it was apparent that the saint's hips had been considerably shifted to the right between the drawing stage and the final

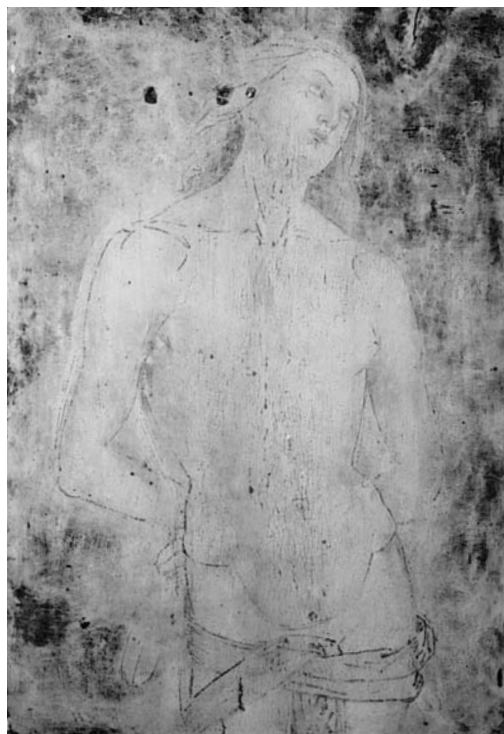


FIG. 3. *Saint Sebastian* (fig. 1), photograph of the reverse of the painting during the 1950 transfer, digitally enhanced to accentuate the incised lines.



FIG. 4. *Saint Sebastian* (fig. 1), diagram of incised lines (fig. 3), reversed and superimposed onto the painting.

painting (fig. 4). In addition, the original incised drawing indicated a loincloth with folds, similar to Perugino's full-length *Saint Sebastian* in the Musée du Louvre, Paris, of circa 1490 (fig. 5), and the closely related figure of the saint in his *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints John the Baptist and Sebastian*, in the Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, of 1493 (fig. 6).⁸ In the Kress painting, a smooth violet ribbon has replaced the original draped loincloth seen in Perugino's pictures. Furthermore, the fingertips of the Kress figure's proper right hand had been incised and, like the Saint Sebastians in Perugino's works, the fingertips were rendered in the painted composition. The Louvre representation of the saint closely resembles the Kress *Saint Sebastian*, particularly in the construction and posture of the figure, the upward tilt of



FIG. 5. *Saint Sebastian*, Pietro Perugino, ca. 1490, oil on wood, 69 ¹/₄ × 45 ⁵/₈ in. (176 × 116 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.



FIG. 6. *Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints John the Baptist and Sebastian*, Pietro Perugino, 1493, oil and egg tempera on panel, 70 ¹/₈ × 64 ⁵/₈ in. (178 × 164 cm). Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

the head, and the pious heavenward gaze. The striking similarity between the Sebastians in the Louvre and Uffizi compositions suggests that the figures may have been derived from the same cartoon. Furthermore, these two figures are certainly ancestors to the Kress *Saint Sebastian*, which should be dated just a few years later, to about 1500.

Striking similarities were also found when the overlay of incised lines in the Kress image was superimposed onto a photograph of the full-length Saint Sebastian depicted in *Saint Sebastian with Two Archers*, a painting formerly in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, Berlin (figs. 7 and 8).⁹ The incised image of the Kress panel was found to be virtually identical to the painted image of the Berlin picture. The only slight difference is that the fingertips of Saint Sebastian's proper right hand are not rendered in the Berlin painting. Both Saint Sebastians have smooth ribbons across their loins and are pierced by a single arrow in their proper right, lower groin. Although the arrows enter in slightly different positions and at different angles, the shafts are similar.



FIG. 7. *Saint Sebastian with Two Archers*, Master of the Greenville Tondo (formerly attributed incorrectly to Giannicola di Paolo), formerly Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, Berlin, Germany; present location unknown.

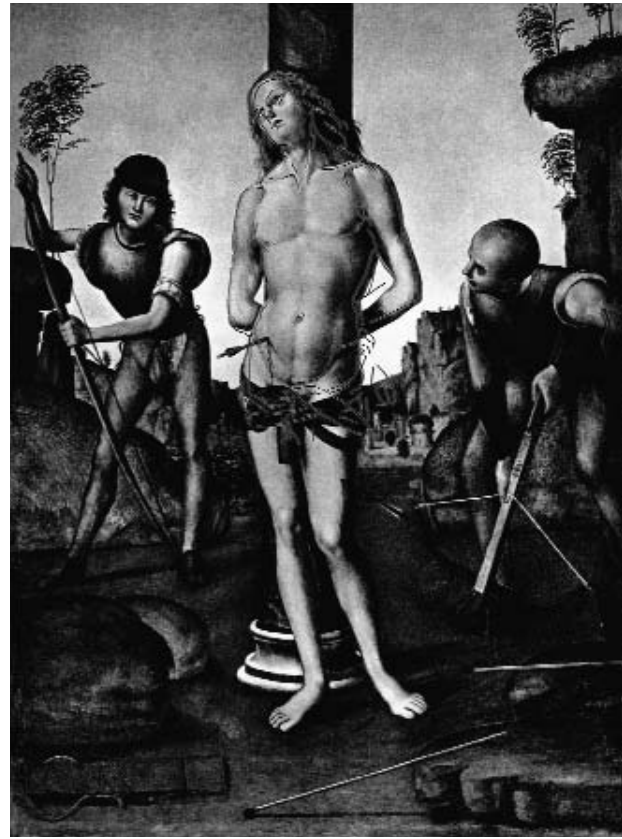


FIG. 8. *Saint Sebastian with Two Archers* (fig. 7), diagram of incised lines in *Saint Sebastian* (fig. 2), reversed and superimposed onto the painting.

The Kress *Saint Sebastian* and *Saint Sebastian with Two Archers* are clearly related not only to one another, but also to Perugino's two aforementioned paintings in the Louvre and Uffizi Gallery. These similar representations of Saint Sebastian indicate the common replication of images within the Perugino workshop and the consequent necessity of keen connoisseurship in the study of Perugino School paintings. A close stylistic examination of the Kress picture will provide not only a better understanding of its relationship to the manner of Perugino, but also its position within the Perugino School, and its possible authorship.

In our painting, a half-length Saint Sebastian stands before a column to which his hands are bound, against a black background which lends a dramatic air to the scene. The saint is naked but for the violet ribbon which serves as a loincloth,

while a single arrow pierces his groin, clearly identifying him as Sebastian. The particular sinuous, graceful stance of the figure, his tilted head and wistful upward gaze, in addition to the apparent lack of pain all recall the manner of Perugino. Indeed, Perugino's compositions are generally marked by a balanced, often symmetrical arrangement of figures and forms, crisp, clear illumination, pastoral landscapes, and an atmosphere of contemplative solemnity, without a display of overt emotion which would disrupt the tranquil stability of the scene.

The most striking aspect of the Kress *Saint Sebastian* is its dark background, a rich black, uncommon in Peruginesque painting, and perhaps a special request of the patron. Whatever its origin, this feature serves a distinct purpose, dramatizing the solitary figure of the saint, elevating it

to the status of an icon. Set off in this manner, Sebastian captivates the viewer's attention, invoking reverence and contemplation, appropriate for the devotional image of a Christian martyr, alluded to by his pierced groin, as well as his nearly naked body, which is presented to the viewer much like the dead Christ in images of the Pietà. Sebastian's body is revealed and meticulously described by the divine light streaming in from the left, and in return, this radiance is the recipient of his pious, tender gaze. Indeed, the dramatic contrast between the illuminated saint and the obscure darkness from which he emerges even foreshadows the theatrical tenebrism of the Baroque master Caravaggio.

Saint Sebastian was a popular subject during the Renaissance, not only in his role as a Christian martyr, for he was also invoked as a protector from plague, and was thus commonly depicted together with Saint Roch. Furthermore, Sebastian provided an opportunity for representing the standing male nude, which was a challenge of great interest to Renaissance artists, and in this regard, he was perhaps the equivalent of the Classical Apollo. Saint Sebastian was martyred under the Roman Emperor Diocletian in circa 300 A.D., and according to his legend, he had been sentenced to execution at the hands of archers, but survived the arrow wounds, and was then clubbed to death.¹⁰ In the Kress picture, Sebastian is pierced by a single arrow, and despite the blood that flows forth from the wound, he apparently suffers no pain. Not only is the lack of pain characteristic of the Peruginesque style, it perhaps also refers to the triumph of the righteous, here exemplified by Saint Sebastian, over the wicked, whose presence is implied by the executioner's arrow.¹¹

The Kress *Saint Sebastian* was clearly executed by a Peruginesque painter, and has been attributed to several artists in this circle, including Raphael Santi (1483–1520), Giannicola di Paolo (ca. 1460/65–1544), Eusebio da San Giorgio (doc. 1480–1540), and the Master of the Greenville Tondo. Perugino directed sizeable workshops in both Florence and Perugia during his prolific

career, for according to archival records, his Florentine *bottega* was in operation for more than twenty years, from 1487 to 1511, while that in Perugia is documented from 1501 to 1513.¹² The early attribution of this painting to Raphael was based primarily upon the aforementioned inscription formerly located on the verso of the work:

QUESTO S. BASTIANO È STATO DA RAFFAELLO
SANZIO DA URBINO DIPINTO PER I SIGNORI
CONTI DEGLI ODDI PERUGIA. I.A.D.S.P.

which indicates Raphael as its author, and the noble Oddi family of Perugia as its original owners.¹³ This inscription is dated to either the seventeenth or eighteenth century by the majority of sources, including Tancred Borenius, Herbert Cook, W.E. Suida, and Fern Rusk Shapley, whereas Roberto Longhi dated the inscription to the sixteenth century, i.e., closer to the painting's time of execution. The last five letters of the inscription, "I.A.D.S.P." are as yet undeciphered.¹⁴ The attribution to Raphael, Perugino's most famous pupil, was maintained while the work was in the Solly and Northwick collections (until 1873), and was then resurrected by Cook in 1913. Likewise, both Longhi and Suida considered it an early work by Raphael while in the studio of Perugino. The attribution to Giannicola di Paolo was proposed by Borenius in 1913, and followed by Umberto Gnoli in 1918, and Raimond van Marle in 1933.¹⁵ However, ascribing the painting to either Raphael or Giannicola di Paolo has since lost favor in the literature.

Eusebio da San Giorgio was suggested by Bernard Berenson as the possible author of the Kress *Saint Sebastian*, and such a proposition merits further consideration.¹⁶ Eusebio was a frequent assistant to both Perugino and the Perugian painter Bernardino Pinturicchio (ca. 1456/60–1513) and collaborated with these masters in the execution of several important commissions. A number of scholars attribute the *Tezi* altarpiece of 1500, in the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia, to the combined efforts of Perugino and Eusebio (fig. 9).¹⁷ It depicts the *Madonna and Child with Saints Nicholas of Tolentino, Bernardino of Siena, Jerome*



FIG. 9. *The Madonna and Child with Saints Nicholas of Tolentino, Bernardino of Siena, Jerome and Sebastian, "The Tezi Altarpiece,"* Pietro Perugino with Eusebio da San Giorgio, 1500, oil and egg tempera on panel, 69⁷/₈ × 52³/₄ in. (177.5 × 134 cm). Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria, Perugia.

and Sebastian, and the figure of Saint Sebastian in this work is similar in many respects to the Kress Sebastian, as seen in the construction of the upper torso, the handling and tautness of the flesh, the position of the head and upward gaze, and especially the treatment of the features and facial expression.

In addition to stylistic considerations, there is further evidence that points to Eusebio da San Giorgio as the author of the Kress painting. Conservation of the picture revealed remnants of a simple mordant-gilt halo as well as a decorative pattern on the violet ribbon loincloth, including a partially effaced perpendicular gold-leaf inscription which can be interpreted as either "SAGIO" or "SACIO." Unfortunately, the third gilt letter remained illegible even with ultraviolet light

examination. If this inscription was originally "SĀGIO," with a stroke mark above the "ā" signifying an abbreviation, then this would indicate "SAN GIORGIO," and thus the name of the painter Eusebio da San Giorgio.¹⁸ Indeed, it is possible that the inscription on the loincloth is Eusebio's signature, however, due to its abraded condition, this is not a certainty. It is important to note that an attribution to the Perugian painter Eusebio coincides with the Perugian provenance of the painting, as was indicated in the previously mentioned lost inscription.

The Kress *Saint Sebastian* has also been recently attributed to the Master of the Greenville Tondo, an unidentified Perugino follower named for the *Madonna and Child with Angels* in the Bob Jones University Collection in Greenville, South Carolina, a Peruginesque work usually dated to circa 1500 (fig. 10).¹⁹ This painting depicts the Madonna and Child seated, as if enthroned, upon a stepped platform, and flanked at the left and right by two splendidly clothed angels.²⁰ The rightmost angel bears a striking likeness to the Kress Sebastian, as the faces and features of the two figures are very similar, and were possibly executed in the same workshop. Furthermore, the particular golden color of this angel's hair, and the manner in which the long hair of both of the angels falls to the sides of their faces is much like that of Sebastian.²¹ As mentioned previously, the Kress Sebastian closely resembles the image of the saint in the lost *Saint Sebastian with Two Archers*, formerly in Berlin, and recently attributed to the Master of the Greenville Tondo.²² The figure of Saint Sebastian in this picture is remarkably similar to the Kress saint in appearance, including the contour and posture of the body, the location of the arrow in the lower proper right groin, and the treatment of the face and features. Thus, the two figures are quite possibly related, and they may have been created in the same workshop using the same cartoon.

The problems posed by the *Saint Sebastian* in the Kress Collection at the Princeton University Art Museum truly illustrate the complexity of connoisseurship associated with the Perugino School.



FIG. 10. *The Madonna and Child with Angels*, Master of the Greenville Tondo, ca. 1500, oil on panel, Bob Jones University, Greenville, SC.

As indicated above, Pietro Perugino operated large workshops in both Florence and Perugia where numerous artists were trained to faithfully reproduce the style of the master. The frequency with which cartoons and model drawings were used and re-used in the creation of standardized figures and compositions within this school is well known and documented, and this, together with the abundance of Peruginesque paintings throughout the world, complicates matters further. This particular difficulty in connoisseurship has been recognized for centuries, for even Giorgio Vasari, in his *Vita* of Raphael from 1568, commented upon the striking similarity of this young artist's work with that of his master:

It is a very notable thing that Raffaello, studying the manner of Pietro, imitated it in every respect so closely, that his copies could not be distinguished from his master's originals, and it was not possible to see any clear difference between his works and Pietro's.²³

Indeed, there are definite likenesses between the Kress *Saint Sebastian* and the style of Eusebio da San Giorgio, in addition to significant comparisons

with the *Madonna and Child with Angels* and the *Saint Sebastian with Two Archers*, both attributed to the Master of the Greenville Tondo. However, based on the existing evidence, the most appropriate attribution of the Kress picture is to the School of Perugino, possibly Eusebio da San Giorgio, due to the presence of the inscription on the loincloth, which may specifically indicate this painter. In sum, the Kress *Saint Sebastian* is a highly characteristic painting from the Italian Renaissance, as it represents a very efficient and productive workshop system.

Annette Rupprecht is a private paintings conservator in New York City. She was previously appointed the first Samuel H. Kress Fellow at the New York University Conservation Center after having worked with Herbert Lank in London. She holds a Fellowship Diploma in Conservation from the Hamilton Kerr Institute in Cambridge and an M.A. in Paintings Conservation from the Cooperstown Program.

Sheri Francis Shaneyfelt holds a B.S. in Biology from Centre College, an M.A. in Art History from Vanderbilt University, and a Ph.D. in Art History from Indiana University at Bloomington, with a specialty in Italian Renaissance and Baroque Art. Her primary field of research is the art of Pietro Perugino and his school, and she is a professor of Art History at the Umbra Institute in Perugia, Italy.

NOTES

1. For the most comprehensive treatment of the life and works of Pietro Perugino refer to Scarpellini (1991), and Canuti (1931). See additionally Bombe (1914); Gnoli (1923a, b, and c); Camesasca (1959); Castellaneta and Camesasca (1969); Becherer et al. (1997); Garibaldi (1999); Garibaldi and Mancini (2004).
2. Exhibition curated by Joseph A. Becherer, November 1997–February 1998, catalogue cited above in note 1.
3. The grain of the wood panel is visible in the X-radiograph composite made at NYU. There is an invoice in the Kress Archive from J. Newcombe for altering this painting's sixteenth-century frame to accommodate a cradle.
4. According to the Samuel H. Kress Art Collection Data, Condition and Restoration Record for this painting: "1950—Flaking pigment in many areas necessitated transferring to new support. M. Modestini removed cradle and wood panel and calcium preparation from back of painting. Applied new preparation to back of picture and attached painting to calcium and glue mixture over

- Masonite. Leveled missing areas with preparation mixture and inpainted with dry colors and egg tempera medium. French varnish isolator. Damar varnish coating.”
5. Visible in the X-radiograph composite made at NYU.
 6. In 2005, Elizabeth Walmsley, Painting Conservator at the National Gallery of Art, located the negatives taken during the 1950 transfer procedure in the Kress Collection Archive, Department of Image Collections, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. The Archive includes early treatment photos of many non-NGA Kress paintings.
 7. For sources, refer to Hiller von Gaertringen (1997), pp. 223–30; Hiller von Gaertringen (1998), pp. 53–69; Hiller von Gaertringen (1999).
 8. The Louvre *Saint Sebastian* is discussed by Scarpellini (1991), pp. 86–7, cat. no. 53; the work is on a panel, 176 × 116 cm. For further information on the Uffizi painting, refer to Scarpellini (1991), p. 86, cat. no. 51; the picture is likewise on a panel, 178 × 164 cm, and is signed and dated by the artist. The Uffizi Sebastian was lauded by Vasari in his 1568 *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects* as “a St. Sebastian worthy of the highest praise;” see Vasari (1568), Vol. 1, p. 593. There are indeed numerous representations of Saint Sebastian in the works of Perugino and his followers; for sources, refer to note 1 above.
 9. This painting, also known as the *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, was formerly attributed erroneously to Giannicola di Paolo and most recently to the Master of the Greenville Tondo. The work was sold through Julius Böhler, Munich, June 1937, no. 669, plate 54, and in the sale catalogue its measurements are given as 146 × 106 cm. The painting had previously been in the Somzée Collection, Brussels (sold in 1904, no. 384) and subsequently in the Sedelmeyer Collection, Paris. The present location of this work is unknown, and it is assumed that it was lost in the 1945 fire in Berlin. William E. Suida noted this particular comparison in the K-1557: Figure 241 entry of *Paintings and Sculpture from the Kress Collection*, 1956.
 10. For further discussion of Saint Sebastian, refer to De Voragine (ca. 1260, trans. by Ryan 1993), Vol. 1, pp. 97–101; Farmer (1992), p. 429; Hall (1979), pp. 276–7.
 11. This is referred to more explicitly in an inscription found at the base of Perugino’s aforementioned Louvre *Saint Sebastian*, “SAGITTAE TUAE INFIXE SUNT MICHl,” which translates as “Your arrows have been thrust into me.” This phrase derives from Psalm 37:14–15 (King James Version): “The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken.”
 12. For further information and documentation concerning Perugino’s workshops in Florence and Perugia, refer to Coonin (1999), pp. 100–104; Scarpellini (1991), pp. 37, 55, 64–6; Canuti (1931 [1983]), Vol. II, pp. 302–5, doc. nos. 540–48.
 13. The Oddi were also important patrons of Raphael, as they commissioned his *Coronation of the Virgin*, in the Vatican Museums, for their chapel in San Francesco al Prato, Perugia, in 1503. For further information, refer to Oberhuber (1977); Jones and Penny (1983), pp. 14–16.
 14. Refer to Borenius (1913), p. 67, no. 58; Suida (1950), p. 8, no. 4; Shapley (1968), pp. 100–101; Becherer et al. (1997), p. 240; Shaneyfelt (2000), Vol. 2, p. 560. For the Raphael attributions, see Borenius (1913), Vol. 1, p. 67, no. 58; and *Catalogue of Pictures at Doughty House, Richmond, Surrey: Collection of Sir Herbert Cook* (1932), p. 72, no. 58; R. Longhi, ms. opinion of 1948, Kress Archives; Suida (1950), p. 8, no. 4.
 15. The Kress *Saint Sebastian* was attributed to Giannicola di Paolo by Borenius (1913), Vol. 1, p. 67, no. 58, and by the same scholar in Crowe and Cavalcaselle (1914), pp. 458–9; Gnoli (1918), p. 37; Gnoli (1923c), p. 140; Van Marle (1933), p. 430. For further information on the Perugian artist Giannicola di Paolo, refer to Shaneyfelt (2000).
 16. Refer to Berenson (1932), p. 178; Berenson (1936), p. 154; see also Becherer et al. (1997), p. 243.
 17. Scholars assigning the *Tezi* altarpiece to Perugino and Eusebio include Berenson (1932), p. 178; Berenson (1968), Vol. 1, p. 123; Scarpellini (1991), p. 102, cat. no. 110; Becherer et al. (1997), p. 243; Shaneyfelt (2000), Vol. II, p. 553. For further information on this altarpiece, see additionally Santi (1989), pp. 103–4, cat. no. 88; Garibaldi (1999), p. 132, cat. no. 57; Garibaldi and Mancini (2004), pp. 270–73.
 18. The inscription was recorded with an abbreviation mark above the “A” by Suida (1950), p. 8, no. 4, and Shapley (1968), p. 100. Thus, the “sA” of the inscription would indicate the word “San” or “Santo,” i.e., “Saint.” If “sA GIO” is the correct reading of this inscription, then it would indicate “SAN GIO,” which in its complete form is “SAN GIORGIO,” and thus the name of the painter Eusebio da San Giorgio. The authors would like to thank Maria Rita Silvestrelli of the Università per Stranieri di Perugia, and Alberto Maria Sartore of the Archivio di Stato, Perugia, for their assistance in deciphering this inscription.
 19. The Kress *Saint Sebastian* was attributed to the Master of the Greenville Tondo by Everett Fahy, in a letter of December 1966 in the Kress Archives; by Shapley (1968), pp. 100–101; and by Todini (1989), Vol. 1, p. 198. For information on the Master of the Greenville Tondo, refer to Todini (1989), Vol. 1, pp. 197–8; Pepper (1984), pp. 20, 317–18, cat. no. 14.1; Zeri (1976), p. 179, cat. no. 118 (a discussion of several paintings commonly attributed to the Greenville master, without specific indication of the artist); Shapley (1968), pp. 100–101; Bob Jones University (1962), p. 54, cat. no. 24. It is important to note that due to the large number of paintings assigned to this particular master (between thirty and forty), it is highly doubtful that one hand could have executed all these works, especially considering the discrepancies in style. The Greenville tondo has not been assigned to Eusebio da San Giorgio in the literature, nor does it appear to be by his hand; other than the aforementioned similarity with the Kress *Saint Sebastian*, the tondo is not stylistically characteristic of Eusebio.
 20. The *Madonna and Child* in the Greenville *Madonna and Child with Angels* was clearly derived from a commonly used Perugino prototype of the *Madonna and Child Enthroned*, and was adapted to fit this particular setting; thus, the noticeable absence of a throne seems rather awkward.
 21. There is also a similarity in the construction of the upper torso of both the rightmost angel in the Greenville tondo and Sebastian, and in the placement and position of the head upon the neck, indicating that these two figures may have originated from a common source, likely within a

- Peruginesque workshop. An additional Perugino School painting attributed to the Master of the Greenville Tondo in which a comparable angel can be observed, especially in the treatment of the face and features, is the *Madonna Adoring the Child with two Music-Making Angels in a Landscape*, in the Pinacoteca Estense, Modena; refer to Shapley (1968), pp. 100–101; Pepper (1984), p. 317; Todini (1989), Vol. I, p. 198; Vol. II, fig. 1333.
22. *Saint Sebastian with Two Archers* was attributed to the Master of the Greenville Tondo by Shapley (1968), p. 100; Pepper (1984), p. 317; and Todini (1989), Vol. II, p. 197.
23. Quoted from Giorgio Vasari (1568), trans. by Gaston du C. de Vere (1996), Vol. I, p. 711.

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- Fig. 10, p. 139. From the Bob Jones University Collection, Greenville, SC.



Madonna and Child with Saint John

Michelangelo Associate, ca. 1500

Egg tempera and perhaps oil on thinned wood panel

27 1/2 × 19 1/8 in. (69.9 × 48.6 cm)

Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York, New York

(K-1569)



FIG. 1. *Madonna and Child with Saint John*, before cleaning and restoration.



FIG. 2. *Madonna and Child with Saint John* (fig. 1), after cleaning and restoration.

The Master of the Manchester Madonna: Restoration, Technique, and a Context for Attribution

Molly March

THE IDENTITY OF THE “Master of the Manchester Madonna” has been a topic of art historical debate for the better part of fifty years.¹ Recently, an exhibition publication entitled *Making and Meaning: The Young Michelangelo* acknowledged this body of scholarship and advanced it by interpreting specific observations of painting technique.² The study principally addressed material aspects of the National Gallery, London’s *Virgin and Child with Saint John and Angels* (“The Manchester Madonna,” fig. 3) and *Entombment* (fig. 4) with the intention of adding these unfinished paintings to Michelangelo’s oeuvre. The authors employed works of an artist close to Michelangelo, formerly the “Master of the Manchester Madonna” and here called Michelangelo Associate, as a foil for the two London pictures attributed to the young Michelangelo in the exhibition. As a result, the distinctive style and technique of this Michelangelo Associate were briefly explored in the *Making and Meaning* project, providing a valuable launching point for further investigation.

This paper is intended to set down selected details of the Michelangelo Associate’s painting technique as encountered during the restoration of the Kress panel *Madonna and Child with Saint John* (figs. 1 and 2). Optimally, this information will join with similar accounts to further illuminate the path towards attributing a small group of pictures traditionally considered together with the Kress painting: *Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist* (fig. 5); *Madonna and Child* (fig. 6); *Pietà* (Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Antica di Palazzo



FIG. 3. *Virgin and Child with Saint John and Angels* ("The Manchester Madonna"), Michelangelo, ca. 1497, egg tempera on wood panel, 41 1/2 x 30 1/2 in. (105.4 x 76.8 cm). National Gallery, London.



FIG. 4. *The Entombment*, Michelangelo, ca. 1501, oil on wood panel (identified), 63 3/8 x 59 in. (161.7 x 149.9 cm). National Gallery, London.



FIG. 5. *Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist*, Michelangelo Associate, ca. 1498, tempera on wood panel, 26 in. (66 cm) dia. Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna.



FIG. 6. *Madonna and Child*, Michelangelo Associate, ca. 1505, tempera and oil on panel, 14 5/8 x 11 3/4 in. (37 x 30 cm). Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan.

Barberini, Rome, Inv. Nr. 948); and *Madonna and Child* (ex-Baden bei Zurich³).⁴

During the last half century, scholars have attributed these works alternatively to an Umbro-Bolognese or Florentine-Ferrarese master, among other descriptive combinations, all meant to recognize the artist's eccentric style in translating Michelangelo's designs.⁵ Most authors agree that the painter's training may have encompassed workshop practices from more than one region of Italy. The *Making and Meaning* study lent credence to this hypothesis through technical analysis: Jill Dunkerton, Senior Restorer, Conservation Department, National Gallery, London, compares the Michelangelo Associate's choice and application of materials in Vienna's *Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist* to painting practices believed to be characteristic of the area around Ferrara, specifically as exemplified by the works of Cosimo Tura.⁶ The potentially regional qualities of this Michelangelo Associate's distinctive painting technique as seen in three pictures, *Virgin and Child with Saint John the Baptist* (Vienna), *Madonna and Child* (Milan), and *Madonna and Child with Saint John* (New York) will be touched upon below in the context of discussing treatment of the Kress panel.

A SIGNATURE PALETTE AND METHOD OF PIGMENT APPLICATION

Madonna and Child with Saint John exhibited chronic lifting of paint along two periodically active vertical joins in the panel support. It was this persistent problem—as well as the obscuring presence of several layers of very discolored varnish—that prompted a decision to undertake the restoration of this picture despite the worn condition of the image (see figs. 1 and 2).⁷ Cleaning the Kress painting revealed a brilliant palette of jewel-like colors that had been completely suppressed by the picture's coatings of darkened resin (fig. 7). The hues uncovered are quite important to firmly linking the Kress panel to the Vienna tondo and the Ambrosiana's *Madonna and Child*, as well as to colors uniquely employed by Domenico Ghirlandaio and his followers for the creation of flesh tones.

The collection of colors used in the Kress, Vienna, and Ambrosiana paintings are strikingly similar in hue, location within each picture, and their technical application. Most notably, the mauve- and lavender-colored architectural planes discovered in the cleaned state of *Madonna and Child with Saint John* in New York are virtually identical in tone to contextual walls in the Vienna tondo image.⁸ In addition, the darkened blue of the Kress Virgin's mantle, though in compromised condition, is quite similar in hue to the deep blue of the Madonna's robe in the Ambrosiana painting, as well as to the underlying or less retouched passages of blue robe in the Vienna tondo. Furthermore, the generalized, mound-like forms of hills in the landscape of the Kress painting are much in keeping with the simple bluish-green shapes portraying distant mountains in the corners of landscape in the Vienna tondo and in the



FIG. 7. *Madonna and Child with Saint John* (fig. 1), cleaned state.

upper-right background of the Ambrosiana's *Madonna and Child*.⁹

The figures in the Kress, Vienna, and Ambrosiana paintings all exhibit skin that is virtually "opalescent" in appearance.¹⁰ This effect is a result of both the artist's selection of hues and method of applying them. The Michelangelo Associate's flesh tones are based on a limited palette of pure, strident colors very similar to those employed by Domenico Ghirlandaio and his workshop, namely an unusually blue-green underpaint modified by cool white and shades of salmon pink. Flesh painted with these bright tones has a markedly different appearance than flesh created with a palette based on more muted hues, such as the light yellow-green (or cream) preparation modeled by warm white highlights, hints of rose and yellow-brown middle tones, and earth-colored shadows that can be seen in the works of artists such as Andrea del Verrocchio, Sandro Botticelli, and others.¹¹

The Michelangelo Associate's use of a triad of brilliant hues for the modeling of flesh most likely derives from contact with Ghirlandaio or one of his pupils, such as Pinturicchio, Granacci, or Michelangelo himself, all of whose early works display this method of coloring skin to some degree.¹² Nevertheless, this relationship to Ghirlandaio's practice does not necessarily tie the Michelangelo Associate exclusively to Florence, as all the artists mentioned worked in Rome for some time near the close of the fifteenth century.¹³ The modeling of flesh in the Kress, Vienna, and Ambrosiana paintings *can* be distinctly separated from that in Ghirlandaio's pictures by the Michelangelo Associate's unique manner of unevenly disposing pigment across flesh passages, and his use of a translucent, brick-red color for shaded regions of skin.¹⁴

In the work of Ghirlandaio and his followers, the opaque white or light pink strokes that create highlights typically extend much further into the middle tone and shade areas of a form than they do in works by the Michelangelo Associate. For example, the hatching strokes that describe flesh in Domenico Ghirlandaio's *Portrait of a Woman*



FIG. 8. *Portrait of a Woman*, Domenico Ghirlandaio, ca. 1490, tempera on wood panel, 22 1/2 x 17 3/8 in. (57.1 x 44.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.

(fig. 8) are all given the same pictorial weight. In this image, though hatches of white are more plentiful in areas of highlight, and pink strokes with hints of the green preparation color dominate in the shadows, the finished flesh is formed by a film that is consistent in opacity and apparent thickness from highlight to shadow. Though the Metropolitan picture may be an exaggerated example, the consistency typical of Ghirlandaio's surface is not present in the flesh passages of the three Michelangelo Associate works under discussion.¹⁵ For example, where flesh is rendered in the Kress picture, brick-colored areas of deepest shade are thin and smooth, as are the brick and salmon passages of semi-shade. The density and low relief of the Michelangelo Associate's hatching strokes notably increase at the perimeter and into the center of skin highlights, as will be further described below.

The exact sequence of pigment application in the flesh passages of the Kress *Madonna and Child with Saint John* was not determined by examining cross-sections of original paint samples. However, close study of these areas during the retouching process, with and without the aid of a stereobinocular microscope, suggested that the Michelangelo Associate created flesh in the following manner. A relatively flat layer of milky blue-green is applied to the white gesso within a figure's perimeter. This underpaint is modified by a translucent, brick-red glaze over sections destined to be middle tone and shadow, leaving the green in reserve for areas of intended highlight. In the middle shade, hints of form are subtly picked out with a few relatively liquid, curved hatching strokes of a semi-opaque deep pink over the smooth, translucent, brick-red glaze. A narrow margin of similarly shaped, short strokes in a more opaque light pink initiates an abrupt transition from middle tone into light. Finally, short, curved hatches of lean, opaque white directly over the reserved green underpaint create the volumetric areas of flesh in highest light. With this system, the final hatched strokes forming the strictly localized flesh highlights are slightly raised or in relief on the picture's otherwise porcelain-smooth surface (figs. 9 and 10).

Flesh passages created in this way have an optically scintillating quality resulting from several factors: the interplay of the complemen-

tary pink and green employed; the pearlescent aspect introduced by scumbling cool white over a lower-valued green; and the presence of significant gaps between the artist's uppermost hatching strokes which allow the color of the underlying layer to participate in the final effect. In addition, the tips of the Michelangelo Associate's cool white highlight strokes are intermeshed with the upper ends of opaque pink middle-tone strokes, and the tips of these opaque pink strokes are interlaced with the scattered, deep-pink colored hatches faintly visible over the brick-red, underglazed shade. As every point of intermeshing stroke ends, a new hue is suggested optically, and these implied transitional tones play an indispensable role in the Michelangelo Associate's delicate rendering of form. This artist's technique of creating the illusion of volume in his figures is so economical and precise in its execution, it seems probable that he painted in the presence of a model or prototype. Furthermore, the nature of the Michelangelo Associate's technical economy in these passages might suggest that he was accustomed to working in another medium such as sculpture, enamels or metalwork. In any case, there are no visible signs of working out a design during the painting process and in fact, no room in the crisply realized yet thinly executed surface layers in which to do so. Before he began painting, this artist knew precisely what he wanted to show and exactly how to achieve his end.



FIG. 9. *Madonna and Child with Saint John* (fig. 1), detail of hatching of flesh tones, Christ Child's foot (cleaned state).



FIG. 10. *Madonna and Child with Saint John* (fig. 1), detail of hatching of flesh tones, Christ Child's chest (cleaned state).

As was suggested above, a more specific articulation of the regional roots of the Michelangelo Associate's painting technique will be fundamental to further study of his identity. To this end, it is important to state that the Michelangelo Associate's coloration of flesh has much more in common with the work of Domenico Ghirlandaio (see fig. 8) than with that of Cosimo Tura (fig. 11), a suggested source for the Michelangelo Associate pictures' extra-Florentine or Ferrarese elements. Cosimo Tura's flesh tones often have a glowing, pearl-like quality resulting from his use of strong highlights scumbled over a darker underlayer (and perhaps the presence of a heightened underdrawing); however his flesh passages are much more somber in overall tonality, and do not



FIG. 11. *Virgin and Child with a Female Martyr and Saint Jerome*, Cosimo Tura, oil on canvas mounted to wood, 60 1/4 × 43 1/2 in. (153 × 110.5 cm). Musée Fesch, Ajaccio, Corsica, France.

employ the brilliant hues that are a hallmark of the Ghirlandaio-derived system of modeling.¹⁶

If the palette of the Michelangelo Associate's flesh tones in the Kress panel cannot be linked to the work of artists such as Cosimo Tura, his physical application of pigments to the panel in flesh and drapery areas might be. The Michelangelo Associate's predilection for modeling that shows thickly applied, localized highlights juxtaposed to relatively smooth, thin middle tones and shadows seems related in its technical execution to works produced by Cosimo Tura and his followers (see figs. 9 and 11). This can be seen in the X-radiograph of the Kress *Madonna and Child with Saint John* (fig. 12).¹⁷ In a similar vein, the Michelangelo Associate's positioning of strong lights on the edges of drapery folds may be connected to the visual example of the Paduan Andrea Mantegna's art—through the Tura circle or directly.¹⁸

AUTOGRAPH HATCHES AND APPROACHES TO RESTORATION

During the process of thinning darkened varnish layers from the Kress *Madonna and Child with Saint John*, semi-opaque scumbles of an aged restoration were also cleared from the painting's surface. The removal of these restorer's touches from the interstices of original brushwork recovered a surface that is alive with eccentrically placed, hatched strokes. The Michelangelo Associate's use of these hatchings is strictly limited to the Virgin's mantle and to passages of flesh. The rest of the painting is executed in fluid, blended brushwork that is barely detectable.¹⁹

The function and execution of these strokes are different in the mantle and skin areas. Intermittently placed, unblended hatchings of crisp white on the blue mantle highlight the edges of drapery folds and summarily suggest selected planes in between these fold ridges. A very similar effect can be seen in the Metropolitan Museum's Ghirlandaio, *Portrait of a Woman*, where light falling on the sitter's upper sleeve is briefly indicated with pale pigment (see fig. 8). The relative



FIG. 12. *Madonna and Child with Saint John* (fig. 1), X-radiograph, detail.

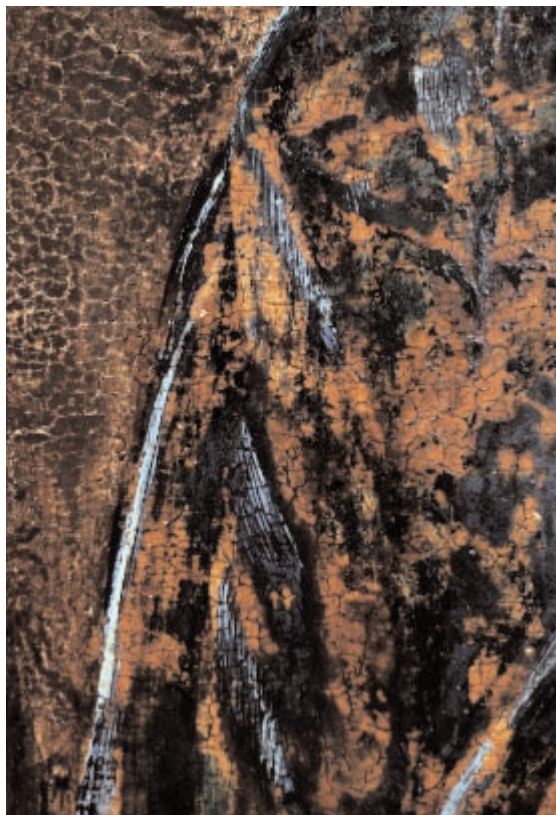


FIG. 13. *Madonna and Child with Saint John* (fig. 1), detail of hatching of blue mantle highlights (cleaned state).

isolation of the white hatches on the Kress panel's abraded blue mantle gives these strokes a quality of decorative accents, though they were once obviously more integrated with the fabric portrayed (fig. 13). In the flesh passages, the Michelangelo Associate's use of hatched strokes is more extensive. Here, a profusion of roughly parallel yet variously angled white and pale pink hatches concisely structure a mannered, bulbous musculature underlying highlighted skin (see figs. 9 and 10).

In approaching the retouching of the Kress Michelangelo Associate painting, the seemingly signature quality of the peculiar hatching strokes in the blue drapery and flesh prompted trips to study the surfaces of the Vienna tondo, the Barberini *Pietà*, and the Ambrosiana panel to look for similarly hatched passages. Travel was also undertaken with the hope of locating a model on which to base any reconstruction of form in the Kress panel's quite fragmentary blue mantle.²⁰ Careful study of these related pictures' surfaces, albeit in gallery conditions for the latter two, revealed that hatching strokes remarkably close in appearance to those found in the Kress painting are present on all three panels. Furthermore, in the Vienna tondo and the Ambrosiana *Madonna and Child*, the individual sizes, shapes and spacing of the hatching strokes not only bear a striking resemblance to those in the Kress painting, but in each picture they are similarly concentrated in the flesh and blue mantle passages.

The virtually identical hatching strokes discovered in the Vienna and Ambrosiana images indicated that the restoration of the Kress panel obviously should retain the legibility of this signature hatching technique while visually reintegrating areas of loss with extant original passages. These calligraphic hatching strokes are so distinctly recognizable that they may one day serve—in combination with other material and documentary evidence—to facilitate the discovery of this artist's identity.

During the treatment of the Kress painting, maintaining the integrity and visibility of these signature hatches in the blue drapery and figures'

flesh was also important to the process of restoration itself. The Kress Virgin's blue mantle is so extensively damaged that, in most areas, only the fragmentary white accent hatchings remain to suggest the original placement of drapery folds (see figs. 7 and 13). In passages of flesh, the Michelangelo Associate's signature hatchings effectively governed the retouching process by their large scale relative to the dimension of each figure. As was noted above in the discussion of painting technique, the length, individual shape and spacing of each extant hatched stroke is indispensable to the illusion of volume in the Kress figures' musculature, as well as to the suggestion of form in the Virgin's blue mantle. It was necessary to study the autograph hatches surrounding losses, particularly in the flesh, on a stroke-by-stroke basis before broken or interrupted forms could be connected across voids in the paint layer without any illusionary compromise to the continuous net of flickering, original strokes that economically create volume.

It proved particularly valuable to have seen the other paintings attributed to this Michelangelo Associate when considering the reintegration of local losses to the network of hatches forming the flesh. The first-hand observation of related works ultimately informed our decision regarding how far to close—or to what degree to retouch—abraded flesh passages in the Kress panel. It was important to consider whether or not to replace the previous restorer's milky touches that were removed with the discolored varnish. These touches, intended to unify or smooth the appearance of the figures' skin, had been applied over hints of green earth underpaint showing in between the lattice of original white and pink hatchings in the Kress picture. First-hand study of the Barberini, Vienna, and Ambrosiana paintings not only provided similar original surfaces to study, but also presented different ways of approaching the restoration of pictures created with the Michelangelo Associate's unusual painting technique.

The Barberini *Pietà* and Vienna tondo were both restored quite recently, the latter just prior to the 1994 *Young Michelangelo* exhibition at the

National Gallery, London. The *Pietà* is currently displayed in a modern frame within a Plexiglas vitrine that was presumably created to protect and/or transport this multi-planked panel. Retouching of losses to the Barberini painting was carried out in *selezione cromatica*, the Italian method of compensating areas of loss with painted lines of diverse colors that blend optically into a single tone when viewed from a distance. The restoration is in the Roman style of *rigatini*: the lines are painted in a rigidly vertical orientation (rather than being directionally placed to suggest form in areas of loss, as is the practice in Florence). Though the intention of this broken-stroke retouching technique is that restorations can be separated from passages of original paint upon close scrutiny, in the case of the Barberini *Pietà*, which is rendered in a restricted *grisaille* palette, this mode of retouching conflicts aesthetically with the painting's unique, original hatching technique.

The 1994 restoration of Vienna's *Virgin and Child with Saint John* was accomplished with retouching that is meant to be invisible upon casual inspection, presenting an integral image for the viewer's enjoyment.²¹ Losses and surface abrasion in the Vienna tondo have been retouched to quite an advanced level of finish. During the treatment of this picture in preparation for its exhibition in London, the restorer appears to have chosen to knit together the Michelangelo Associate's hatched strokes, placing translucent scumbles in between them, thereby producing a tonally even or smooth surface in the flesh passages and some areas of the blue mantle in the Vienna painting.²²

The *Madonna and Child* in the Pinacoteca Ambrosiana was last restored employing both intentionally visible and less apparent methods of loss compensation. A large part of the original background in the upper left corner of this painting no longer exists. This area of the Ambrosiana picture is currently toned with a simple beige color, a retouching technique known in Italy as *neutro*, the filling of areas of total image loss with a tone intended as neutral. The rest of the picture has been loosely retouched in colors that currently

do not exactly match the surrounding original pigment. Though the transparency and colorlessness of the current varnish on this painting allow one to appreciate the Michelangelo Associate's characteristic palette, the imprecision of the retouches in placement and hue compromises the legibility of the original hatching brushwork, particularly in the figures' flesh.

The study of these three diverse approaches to restoring paintings attributed to the Michelangelo Associate reconfirmed the fragility of this artist's particular mode of image making and its vulnerability to aesthetic compromise. Tonal transitions in flesh passages of the Vienna, Ambrosiana, and Kress paintings have all been affected by strong cleaning in the past, with some loss to middle tone and mid-shade pink hatchings which may contain the often sensitive vermilion. Due to the abraded state of these pictures, it is unclear whether or not the opalescent white flesh highlights were once covered with a now faded or lost glaze. In addition, the degree to which the skeletal hatching strokes in the flesh tones were originally incorporated with their surround by scumbles covering interstices in the extant brushwork lattice also remains unknown. To avoid aesthetic or visual confusion, losses to the figures' flesh in the Kress *Madonna and Child with Saint John* were reintegrated with comparative restraint during the recently concluded restoration.

Flesh passages of the Kress painting were retouched in roughly the same sequence that they were originally painted, from shade, to middle tone, to highlight. At points of complete loss, the voids were filled with new, white gesso and then toned to match the Michelangelo Associate's signature blue-green shade of flesh underpaint. Next, these toned losses, as well as spots of the original green preparation exposed by abrasion, were locally glazed with brick red in passages of middle tone and shadow to integrate them with the prevalent original color. The green toned losses in areas of highlighted flesh were not glazed with red but were left in reserve. As the translucent, brick-red layer in the shadows and middle tones was unified by retouching, it became

increasingly possible to see the faint, hot pink strokes delicately suggesting form on top of this layer in the middle tones. Where broken, these original pink strokes were reconnected, but no further retouching was applied to these areas. Finally, the palest pink and pure white highlights of the flesh were retouched by discreetly connecting points where original hatches of paint had obviously been interrupted by pigment loss mid-stroke. Due to the Michelangelo Associate's abbreviated mode of indicating form, the overall shape of each highlight in his figures' flesh is of crucial importance to the intended illusion. Thus, during the final retouching of the flesh highlights, much time was spent studying the original strokes at the edges of the lighted areas, and retouching along these margins was intentionally minimal in order to preserve an impression of the original, though abraded, transitions and isolated shapes building the eccentric musculature of this artist's figures.

The passage showing the most extensive paint loss in *Madonna and Child with Saint John* is the blue mantle of the Virgin (see figs. 7 and 13). The fragmentary state of the Kress mantle and numerous past campaigns of restoration in this area make a clear assessment of the original painting technique quite difficult. Scattered hints collected from selected, better preserved parts of the robe can merely suggest the original order in which the layers of pigment were applied. In several areas of complete paint loss, abraded sections of a dark brown, summary design drawn with a brush can be seen on the exposed amber-colored gesso ground. These preparatory lines seem to sketch the placement of drapery folds, but the extant fragments are few and far between, and it was not possible to link them into a meaningful drawing. During the initial stage of painting, passages intended to be deepest shade in the mantle appear to have been coated with a hot, brown glaze directly over the sized gesso ground.²³ Areas of semi-shade and middle tone were then laid in with a translucent, bright green that was subsequently covered with a medium, opaque blue, quite smoothly rendered, showing little or no trace of brushwork. The margins of intended

highlight along the edges of folds in these flat, middle tone areas were then prepared with a thicker layer of paler, opaque blue, slightly in relief of the middle tone surface. With the basic locations of deep shade, middle tone and highlight already indicated, isolated sequences of pure white hatching strokes were applied to concisely articulate the tubular curves of drapery fold apices on top of the paler blue margins, and to summarily suggest light falling on slumped planes of interfold fabric in the flat, middle tone blue passages.²⁴ Finally, transparent blue glazes were applied, presumably to soften or modify the transitions from shadow to middle tone to highlight, however these uppermost glazes are now extremely abraded in some areas and entirely lost in others.

It is interesting to note that the Madonna's blue robe in the Vienna tondo is also significantly damaged. Furthermore, there is a remarkable similarity between the patterns of loss in the Vienna and Kress mantles. In their cleaned state, both the Kress and Vienna paintings present blue mantles in which losses are distributed in such a way that they give the false impression of a patchwork or brocade fabric (see fig. 7). The similarity of the damages in the mantles of the Kress and Vienna paintings may support the supposition that these two pictures are by the same hand or from the same studio; the evidence is in the pattern of the loss. The like patterns of loss would suggest that the mantles in both paintings were constructed with similar, if not identical, sequences of layers and mixtures of pigments/media—a “fingerprint” strata that had a specific chemical vulnerability—and thus, were identically affected by their later, isolated cleanings.²⁵

An exceptionally well-preserved passage of blue mantle in the lower left corner of the Ambrosiana's *Madonna and Child* may provide an example of how the finishing layers on the blue robes of the Kress and Vienna paintings once appeared (see fig. 6). In this beautiful bit of eccentrically realized drapery, hints of the bright green preparatory layer, the opaque, medium-blue middle tone, and the carefully placed white hatches of the highlights described above are ultimately unified by a pool-

ing, pure blue glaze and selected, liquid strokes of a hot brown transparent color similar to that forming deepest shade in the mantle of the Kress Virgin. In the Ambrosiana mantle, sections of the hatching strokes meant to show textile edges in brightest highlight are pure white. However, the extremities of these same white strokes lie underneath an ultra-transparent glaze of blue. The signature hatching strokes remain crisp and unblended, yet the selectively placed final glaze introduces a subtler transition from light into shade.²⁶

MATERIAL ASPECTS OF TECHNIQUE

During restoration of the Kress Michelangelo Associate painting, it was possible to examine only the Kress panel and the Vienna tondo in the context of a conservation studio. Close inspection confirmed many physical similarities between these two works that were briefly addressed by the *Making and Meaning* project. In her essay, “The painting technique of the *Manchester Madonna*,” Dunkerton discusses a profusion of tiny craters that can be seen in lighter passages of the *Manchester Madonna*, the *Entombment*, and to some extent, Michelangelo's *Doni Tondo*. In addition, she notes that these craters—suspected to be a result of burst bubbles in a rapidly or vigorously applied gesso—are present in the preparation of the National Gallery, London's *Virgin and Child* by Domenico Ghirlandaio.²⁷ In the cleaned state of the Kress Michelangelo Associate painting, craters were also discovered in the thinly painted areas such as the lower sky at the left horizon, the *cangiante* cloth under the Christ Child (see fig. 9), and the Virgin's lilac-shaded veil. The craters observed in the surface of the Kress painting are extremely similar in size and distribution to those noted in the gesso grounds of Ghirlandaio and Michelangelo. This detail, which may signify a specific workshop's process, might eventually lend support to the hypothesis that the Michelangelo Associate had some in-studio contact with Ghirlandaio or one of his pupils.

Since the Virgin's blue mantle is extremely damaged in both the Kress Michelangelo Associate panel and the Vienna tondo, it was possible

during the cleaning of each picture to see the remarkably amber-yellow appearance of the gesso in areas of complete paint loss (see figs. 7 and 13). At first glance, this amber tone could be attributed merely to the presence of a sealing layer of glue on top of a white gesso, or to staining imparted by later oils, resins and glues introduced during restorations. However, cross-sections of samples taken from the blue robe of the Kress painting show that the actual gesso layer appears quite uniformly yellow. The color apparent seems to be largely a result of an unusually high glue content in the gesso and perhaps some trace inclusion of pigments, as scattered particles of red lake and black were identified in the Kress samples analyzed.²⁸ These findings are in accord with Franz Maringer's analysis of the amber colored preparation layer in the Vienna tondo, where he observed a very glue-rich gesso containing particles of the pigment red ochre.²⁹ Maringer has also been able to identify a similar ground in a Venetian picture.³⁰ During a discussion of the Vienna tondo in the *Making and Meaning* study, Dunkerton noted that this yellow-toned, glue-rich gesso is not found in paintings produced by the Ghirlandaio studio, though it has been identified in works of Cosimo Tura and other artists painting in and around Ferrara.³¹ Thus, the presence of a remarkably glue-rich gesso in the Kress and Vienna pictures of the Michelangelo Associate may indicate that this artist had an early exposure to technical practices in northern Italy.

Under natural light, no significant traces of any preparatory underdrawing are visible on the surface of the Kress painting. While relatively bold lines realized in warm brown pigment applied with a thin brush can be seen circumscribing John the Baptist's left arm and hand, these lines seem to be an in-process articulation or strengthening of contours within the paint layer, rather than a preparatory underdrawing. Furthermore, these brown contour lines in the Kress picture may once have been slightly covered and visually softened by a translucent, final scumble of flesh coloring; due to surface abrasion, it is possible to see in the cleaned state of the painting that similar brown

lines echoing the outermost contours of the Christ Child's right, inner arm, left shin and left foot are actually slightly within the finally realized perimeter of each limb (see figs. 9 and 10). During its restoration, the surface of the Kress panel was examined via infrared reflectography (IRR) with a Hamamatsu vidicon camera and Sony monitor in order to look for preparatory underdrawing beneath the paint layers of the Michelangelo Associate's picture. An image of any underdrawing in the area of the extremely damaged blue mantle might have assisted the restorer in recovering some semblance of the original arrangement of drapery folds during retouching of the robe. Unfortunately, virtually no underdrawing was visible in the Kress painting with the vidicon camera, save for a few dark, brush-applied shapes near the upper left edge in the swag of red curtain.

IRR images of the Vienna tondo do show some dark underdrawing, though the drawing recorded consists of only a scant description of drapery forms and a pronounced adjustment to the position of the proper right foot of the Virgin in the foreground. In fact, it may be interesting to note that the drawing visible via IRR in the Vienna tondo seems to be confined to corrections of the picture's design. It has been speculated that the characteristic mint green underpaint in the flesh of the Michelangelo Associate's pictures is comprised of a green earth that is particularly opaque to IRR inspection.³² In addition to this, any drawing done in a transparent red or reddish-brown color may be invisible to infrared examination as these hues become transparent when viewed by an IRR camera while illuminated by light from the infrared part of the visible light spectrum. In theory, the Michelangelo Associate could have made a more involved preparatory design for both the Kress and Vienna paintings than can be imaged by IRR.³³ However, if this artist was painting in the presence of a model or finished drawing for all or parts of his picture, it might be reasonable to assume that only a brief indication of form was necessary in the underdrawing phase. This lack of detectible underdrawing in the Kress panel is distinctly different from the profusion

of preliminary designs evident in Cosimo Tura's works. With Tura's later paintings especially, strongly hatched underdrawings are commonly quite legible when the pictures are scanned with an IRR camera. At the very least, this would imply that the Michelangelo Associate made a selection of drawing materials and underpaint pigments that differ from those employed by Cosimo Tura. It would be equally interesting to compare IRR images of paintings from the workshop of Ghirlandaio with those taken from the Michelangelo Associate's pictures, particularly in the context of the significant body of highly finished drawings for paintings left by Ghirlandaio.

Preparatory incisions in the gesso ground of the Kress, Vienna, and Barberini pictures take the place of drawing in designing an architectural context for each painting's figures. Linear incisions in the Kress panel define the straight edges of the foreground plinth and the top of the wall extending behind the Michelangelo Associate's figures. Incisions cut into the ground of the Vienna tondo also indicate the intersections of architectural planes as well as the placement of squares in the picture's checkered tile floor. Curiously, the general locations of the reading stand at left and the figure of John the Baptist at lower right in the Vienna tondo are marked in the picture's gesso by incisions that circumscribe a vertically oriented ellipse of pictorial surface occupied by each painted figure. (These incised ellipses might be later vandalism, but they are not accompanied by any chipping or damage to the original paint.) Incisions describing architecture in the Kress and Vienna paintings are remarkably similar with regard to their imprecise character; the incised lines do not meet exactly at corners of planes where they intersect, but over-shoot the mark in a like manner in each picture. Furthermore, the planes that are finally realized in paint are slightly corrected in position or do not rigidly follow the preliminary incisions, and the nature of these corrections in the painting phase is quite comparable in the two images. Since the conception of space in the Ambrosiana panel has often been thought to be the most advanced or Michelangesque of

the group of paintings under discussion, it might be useful to study any incisions in this panel and their relationship to the final, painted forms.

The Kress panel and the Vienna tondo are also alike in finishing details that would have been applied in the last stages of painting: two parallel bands of mordant gilding trim the edges of both pictures' blue mantles—as well as the Madonna's veil in the Ambrosiana, Vienna, and Barberini paintings and the drapery under the dead Christ in the *Pietà*. This double line of mordant gilt trim actually interrupts diagonally placed signature hatching strokes at the highlighted edge of a drapery fold identically in the Kress picture and in the Barberini panel. Additional gilding decorates the Vienna tondo's cloth of honor and the Kress Virgin's neckline, cuffs, and the buttons closing her red tunic at the wrists, and all of the paintings in the Michelangelo Associate group



FIG. 14. *The Libyan Sibyl*, Michelangelo. Sistine Chapel, Vatican Palace, Vatican State. Lunette fresco, after restoration.

have mordant gilt haloes. The presence of delicate mordant gilt detail on the Michelangelo Associate's paintings at first seems oddly *retardataire* in the context of the sculptural monumentality commonly associated with Michelangelo's art. However, Dunkerton has noted that the use of decorative mordant gilding is a persistent feature of paintings produced by the studio of Ghirlandaio and that it can also be found on paintings by Granacci.³⁴ It would be difficult to speculate about any gilt decoration that may have been planned for the National Gallery, London's *Manchester Madonna* as mordant gilding is typically a final step in the creation process and the picture is unfinished. Nonetheless, there are selected mordant gilt details enlivening the surface of Michelangelo's later *Doni Tondo* in the Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence.³⁵

Another final-stage element that the Kress panel and the Vienna tondo share is a quarter-inch-wide, black painted border applied around the entire perimeter of each image. In areas of surface wear or pinpoint losses to this border, it is possible to see that original pigment lies underneath. The images appear to have been finished out to the edges of the support before this border was superimposed. These black borders would be an intriguing topic for further investigation, particularly with regard to period practice in appending frames to the paintings. It could also be useful to investigate whether the painted black border is part of a specific regional tradition. In the last decade of the fifteenth century and the opening decade of the sixteenth, similarly painted borders frame many of the images by the Bolognese artist Francesco Francia and his son Giacomo; they have also been observed on late paintings of Perugino and early pictures of Raphael. It may be that these borders have not been studied because they seem to be routinely cropped out of photographic reproductions of the paintings. In addition, the past trimming of panel edges may have caused many examples to be lost over time.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:
SCULPTURAL SOURCES AND EMULATION



FIG. 15. *Fanciullo Arcière*, Attributed to Michelangelo, marble.

During the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century period in which the Michelangelo Associate produced his images, painters were particularly influenced by their study and emulation of sculpture, both contemporary and antique. The most obvious manifestation of this in the Kress panel would be the similarity of the Christ Child and John the Baptist figures to sculpted antique cupids which were quite popular objects with artists and collectors at the beginning of the sixteenth century. It is more than likely that the Michelangelo Associate copied this motif from Michelangelo rather than consciously working after the antique himself (figs. 14 and 15). The Michelangelo Associate routinely translated designs by Michelangelo in his compositions, and Michelangelo himself is known to have generously shared his drawings and *cartonetti* with



FIG. 16. *Virgin and Child with the Infant Saint John (Taddei Tondo)*, Michelangelo, ca. 1504–05, marble. Royal Academy of Arts, London.



FIG. 17. *Virgin and Child with the Infant Saint John (Pitti Tondo)*, Michelangelo, ca. 1503, marble. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy.

other artists.³⁶ However, if the Michelangelo Associate was as intimate with Michelangelo as is currently believed, he may have had direct access not only to drawings of the master but also to his in-progress sculptural projects and paintings.³⁷ In some instances, the Michelangelo Associate may have emulated sculpture by borrowing motifs directly from or in the presence of Michelangelo's reliefs.³⁸ It is tempting to see the opalescent quality of the Michelangelo Associate's flesh passages as an attempt to transcribe light refracted by the surface of carved marble. It may be equally fanciful to suggest that his signature hatching strokes in flesh and drapery reflect an aesthetic appreciation of the parallel scoring lines of a stone chisel that cover selected surfaces of sculptures such as Michelangelo's *Virgin and Child with the Infant Saint John (Taddei Tondo, fig. 16)*, or his *Pitti Tondo* of the same subject (fig. 17).

Parts of the figures portrayed in the Kress *Madonna and Child with Saint John* are certainly derived from specific passages in Michelangelo's oeuvre. The Kress Virgin's head in profile and the general form of her veil are most definitely a quotation of the head and veil in Michelangelo's *Madonna della Scala* (fig. 18).³⁹ The deportment of the Virgin's hands and wrists in the Kress painting is resonantly similar to that realized in the *Madonna della Scala*, the *Pitti Tondo* and the *Manchester Madonna* (see figs. 2, 3, 17 and 18). The Michelangelo Associate's above-waist poses for the Christ Child and the young Saint John in the Kress picture correspond quite closely to the positions of the two unfinished angels in the upper left corner of Michelangelo's *Manchester Madonna*, and also appear notably similar to the two painted figures behind the *Libyan Sibyl* in the Sistine Chapel (see figs. 2, 3, and 14). The Kress Virgin's standing form with outstretched arms holding a book is initially reminiscent of poses in Annunciation scenes, and seems oddly incongruous with the Kress image. However, the position of the Kress Virgin has much in common with the standing angel at the far right in the *Manchester Madonna* and is quite similar to the upper part of the seated figure in the lower left

corner of the *Entombment* (see figs. 2, 3, and 4), and thus again may simply be a design lifted from Michelangelo's imagery.

As Michelangelo's motifs are, for the most part, faithfully repeated by the Michelangelo Associate, a direct comparison between their treatments of a figure in space is possible. It is sufficient to say here that the Michelangelo Associate does not approach Michelangelo's mastery of form and seamless spatial transitions. Rather, the Michelangelo Associate's pictures evoke a sense of compressed space and cut-out figures. The impression that the Michelangelo Associate's figures are cut-out or isolated from their pictorial context may be partially a result of his picture-making method. As noted above, only sections of each figure portrayed in the Kress painting can be linked with a known Michelangelesque source. It is possible that the isolation of the



FIG. 18. *Madonna della Scala*, Michelangelo, ca. 1490, marble. Casa Buonarroti, Florence, Italy.

Michelangelo Associate's figures is a result of his disparate borrowings, the whole being a pastiche. In addition, the effect of shallow space may partly come from his literal interpretation of a model; the head of the Kress Virgin may appear relatively flat if it was directly copied from the *Madonna della Scala*, a stone image sculpted in low relief. The Michelangelo Associate's figures' disconnection from their context and each other may also result from his emulation but incomplete realization of Michelangelo's painting sequence. The unfinished pictures in the National Gallery, London show that Michelangelo the painter typically brought individual color areas of his composition to a high degree of finish at different times (see figs. 3 and 4). If our Associate was in a position to observe Michelangelo working, he may have attempted to copy this method even though he seemingly lacked the painterly skill to achieve Michelangelo's ultimately seamless result.

A developed understanding of the unique character of the Michelangelo Associate's adaptations of Michelangelo's designs will ultimately assist scholars in discovering his identity. The Ferrarese or extra-Florentine elongation of figures in his pictures is affected both by selected passages of eccentrically realized form apparently drawn free-hand, and by his unequal distribution of pigment in areas of drapery and flesh. The perimeters of figures that can be directly linked to Michelangelesque models are actually quite artfully proportioned. However, within these outlines, the greater density and opacity of this Michelangelo Associate's highlights imply attenuated shapes within his compositions that overwhelm the relatively smooth, translucent planes of middle tone and shadow, creating elongated linear accents in his pictures that are almost visually detached from the image portrayed.

Despite the peculiarities of our artist's approach to image making, his unique points of concordance with Michelangelo's painting practice should not be underestimated. During the search for the Michelangelo Associate's identity, there may eventually be sufficient technical evidence to disqualify any artist who did not have

the most intimate access to Michelangelo as he painted. On close inspection, it is possible to see that Michelangelo himself also structured the highlights in his flesh passages with hatching, though his strokes are infinitely finer and more smoothly blended together than the autograph hatches of the Michelangelo Associate (see figs. 2 and 3). The brick-red color that notably separated the Michelangelo Associate's palette of flesh colors from that of the Ghirlandaio studio *does* appear in some of Michelangelo's paintings; as noted previously, a brick-red hue similar to that employed by the Michelangelo Associate is used by Michelangelo to articulate the middle tones and shadows of Adam's body in the central Sistine Chapel *Creation*, as well as those of figures such as the Libyan Sibyl in the lunettes. Furthermore, painted brown contour lines such as those that circumscribe the limbs of figures in the Kress panel can also be seen articulating exterior contours of Michelangelo's figures in the *Entombment* and in the Uffizi's *Doni Tondo*. Michelangelo seems to employ these red-brown lines for initial design as well as for a more advanced strengthening of contours during the painting process, a technique also observed in the works of the Michelangelo Associate. However, the function of Michelangelo's finally applied brown lines is to emphasize the illusion of his figures' volume, making their limbs seem to almost protrude from the picture plane, an effect not matched by the Michelangelo Associate.

In conclusion, it should be re-emphasized that the autograph hatching strokes of the Michelangelo Associate are fundamentally unique in their execution and pictorial placement. As such, they may prove to be the most significant material evidence we have to identify other works and, one hopes, the artist himself. These hatchings seem to have much in common with similarly placed marks found in period drawings, particularly those of Ghirlandaio, for example, his *Drapery Study for a Kneeling Figure* in Florence (though the likeness of the Michelangelo Associate's painted hatchings to Ghirlandaio's drawn ones may simply reflect this master's draughts-

manship methods as digested by Michelangelo and passed on to our Associate).⁴⁰ In future investigations of the Michelangelo Associate's identity it may also be important to examine the drawings of artists in the circle of Cosimo Tura; strokes quite similar to our artist's signature hatchings can be seen in works such as Tura's *Evangelist*, and technical analyses of the Vienna tondo and the Kress panel have strengthened the hypothesis that the Michelangelo Associate had an early exposure to practices in the Ferrara region.⁴¹ Further collection of detailed observations of these paintings supported by directed, comparative analysis of their materials and rigorous archival research should one day crystallize an identity and link a name to the unmistakably recognizable hand of this Michelangelo Associate.

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Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence. She has a private studio for the restoration of Old Master paintings in New York and specializes in Italian pictures.

NOTES

1. Zeri (1953).
2. Hirst and Dunkerton (1994).
3. For illustrations of the ex-Baden bei Zurich painting and the Barberini *Pietà*, see Freedberg (1972), Vol. 2, figs. 335 and 334, respectively. A color reproduction of the *Pietà* appears on p. 39, plate 26 of Hirst and Dunkerton (1994).
4. Though these paintings are often discussed together, opinions differ as to whether they are all by the same artist. To this viewer, the Barberini *Pietà* and the *Madonna and Child*, ex-Baden bei Zurich, seem stylistically quite similar to each other, for example, in the contorted flex of the hands portrayed and the pinched features of the faces. The Kress panel, the Vienna tondo, and the Ambrosiana's *Madonna and Child* do not share these qualities but are extremely close to each other in terms of surface character, palette, and execution. In the past, the Ambrosiana picture has been noted as possessing a sophisticated construction of space that is not present in the Kress and Vienna paintings. However, this might be explained by the Michelangelo Associate's use of another artist's more advanced cartoon or model for the Ambrosiana image; the surface quality, brushwork, and coloration of the cleaned Ambrosiana painting are extremely similar to those in the Kress panel and the Vienna tondo.
5. See for example: Freedberg (1972), Vol. 1, pp. 255–8.
6. Dr. Martina Fleischer of the Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der Bildenden Künste is preparing a manuscript on the Vienna tondo, and I would like to thank Dr. Franz Maringer for several hours of valuable discussion regarding this painting, as well as Professor Norbert Baer of the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts for introducing me to Dr. Maringer. For the first part of the technical information to be published about the Vienna tondo, see Maringer (1996). For Cosimo Tura's technique, see articles by Dunkerton and Marcello Toffanello in Campbell (2002). For an earlier assessment of Tura's technique, see Dunkerton (1994).
7. During the course of the Kress painting's restoration, a heavy, "Pichetto" cradle was removed from the panel's reverse. This allowed the plank to acquire a very slightly convex, natural curve, which seems to have alleviated much of the internal stresses that caused the past instability of the paint layers adjacent to the two vertical joins; see Ann Hoenigswald's article in this volume.
8. In the *Making and Meaning* study, Dunkerton describes a soft lavender color typically used in frescoes of this period as "morellone." Though she rightly speculates that in easel painting the color is often derived from a mixture of lead white, red lake, and a blue pigment, *Caput Mortuum* has been identified as a coloring component of the architectural planes in the Vienna tondo. Libby Sheldon of UCL Paintings Analysis, University College, London is currently studying the pigments used in the creation of the Kress painting, and these results will be published at a later date. For Dunkerton's comment on *morellone*, see Hirst and Dunkerton (1994), p. 102. The Vienna tondo pigment analysis is unpublished as of this printing.
9. It is important to compare the Ambrosiana panel in its most current state to the Kress and Vienna images. An old photograph in the Contini-Volterra Archive at Vanderbilt University shows the Ambrosiana picture when it was quite heavily restored. Any studies based on the appearance of this old photo of a now-absent restoration campaign would be misleading as the figures' flesh, the left-hand architectural forms and the background landscape were once extensively repainted, changing the palette and style of this image entirely. Many thanks to Joseph Mella, Director of the Vanderbilt Fine Arts Gallery, for facilitating our visit to the archive.
10. The term "opalescent" was aptly used previously by Dunkerton in Hirst and Dunkerton (1994).
11. Compare the coloration of flesh in the National Gallery, London's Ghirlandaio, *The Virgin and Child* (N63939) to the *Virgin and Child with Two Angels* (N6296), attributed to Andrea del Verrocchio in the same collection. The brilliant colors characteristic of the Ghirlandaio studio may be associated with a persistent use of pure tempera technique in this workshop during years when oil painting was already quite widely practiced (see Hirst and Dunkerton (1994), p. 84). Joyce Plesters has associated Verrocchio and his followers' warmer, subtler technique of modeling flesh with the practice of *buon fresco*, where the light color of the ground seen through applied color washes affects "all but the strongest highlights." See Plesters in National Gallery (1970), p. 27.
12. Roughly concurrent with the ascendance of oil painting as a popular technique, most Ghirlandaio pupils such as Granacci seem to have moved away from the bright, pure-color modeling of flesh in their later works. (For example, see the beautiful Granacci, *Madonna and Child* recently given to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York by Mario and Dianne Dwyer Modestini.)
13. A curious occurrence of this white-blue/green-pink modeling of flesh can be seen in the work of the Abruzzese artist, Saturnino Gatti, painting in 1510. See the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Gatti, *The Translation of the Holy House of Loreto*, 1973.319. For one version of the Roman dates of Pinturicchio, Granacci, and Michelangelo, see Gallwitz (1999), pp. 120, 136, 148.
14. Even so, in Milan there is an *Adoration of the Child* currently attributed to the workshop of Ghirlandaio in which traces of a brick-red hue are scantily employed for flesh middle tones (Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Inv. Nr. 2. Brivio Donation, 1959). As will be noted below, though this brick-red hue is not routinely employed by Ghirlandaio, if at all, it *can* be found in shaded flesh passages of paintings by Michelangelo, for example, in the recently cleaned Sistine Chapel figures of the Libyan Sibyl and Adam (see fig. 14).
15. This lack of continuous opacity or consistent film thickness across flesh passages of the Michelangelo Associate's paintings may be slightly over-emphasized today due to the apparent susceptibility of his surfaces to mechanical and chemical abrasion. Nonetheless, as will be described, the transition from dense, thickly applied strokes in highlights

- to a smooth, barely articulated surface in deep shadow is also a feature of the Michelangelo Associate's original painting technique.
16. For discussion of Tura's technique of heightening or adding lights to his underdrawing, see comments throughout Campbell (2002), especially p. 127.
 17. Due to the nature of the pigments used by the Michelangelo Associate for flesh tones, the differences in thickness of application between highlight and shadow are fortuitously diagrammed by an X-radiograph of the painting (see fig. 12), providing a map of this technique. For future investigations of attribution, comparative study of the X-radiograph images of pictures that may be by this Michelangelo Associate, as well as those of paintings by Tura and other non-Florentine artists might be useful.
 18. See Marcello Toffanello's wonderful essay, "Cosmè Tura: drawing and its pictorial complements" in Campbell (2002), pp. 153–72. The painted draperies of Andrea Mantegna are consistently heightened along fold edges with concentrated touches of opaque pigment or gold. Mantegna's articulation of edges in turn may be related to the art of Giovanni Bellini. Please see the gold heightening applied in hatches that illuminates the blue robe of Christ in Bellini's *Agony in the Garden*, circa 1465, N6726, National Gallery, London, as well as Andrea Mantegna's *Adoration of the Shepherds*, 32.130.2, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
 19. The only exception to this in the Kress painting would be the green fringe that sporadically trims the red drapery in the upper register. The strokes that form this fringe are similar in scale and appearance to those accenting the blue mantle and creating mass in the flesh. However, in the case of the curtain, each stroke is actually a string of fringe. The function is much more direct or decoratively literal, as opposed to the roles of hatching strokes indicating light in the blue mantle and volume in the flesh passages.
 20. Travel to Vienna, Milan, and Rome was funded by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation as part of a Fellowship for Advanced Training in Paintings Conservation at the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York.
 21. I must extend warm thanks to Dr. Renate Trnek, Director, and Professor Peter Halbgebauer, Chief Restorer, of the Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der Bildenden Künste for allowing me access to the painting and for helpfully commenting on its restoration, which was accomplished under great time pressure in preparation for the London exhibition.
 22. The existence of old retouches in between the Michelangelo Associate's strokes in the flesh tones of the Vienna tondo prior to the most recent cleaning was noted in a report on the picture from the Museum's files, generously shared with me by Dr. Franz Maringer in his Vienna offices.
 23. This hot brown glaze may be altered in color from its original appearance. The pigments employed have not yet been analyzed.
 24. During cleaning of the Kress picture, a curious, relatively under-bound, opaque, dull green could be seen sporadically throughout the damaged mantle, sometimes in association with or as a preparation for another very lean blue. These color layers were subsequently found to contain the pigment blue ochre and identified as eighteenth-century restorations by Libby Sheldon of UCL Painting Analysis, London, in her study of paint samples from the Kress robe.
 25. Dr. Renate Trnek, Director of the Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der Bildenden Künste, generously granted permission for me to inspect the cleaned-state photographs of the Vienna tondo.
 26. Following my departure from the Samuel H. Kress Program in Paintings Conservation in May 2002, Dianne Dwyer Modestini applied final glazes to the highlights of the Kress panel's blue mantle and flesh, and added final touches to the landscape and the halo of Saint John. The painting's restoration was deemed complete; the picture was placed in a new vitrine and returned to the Kress Foundation in October 2002.
 27. Dunkerton in Hirst and Dunkerton (1994), pp. 90–91. Several illustrations of these craters appear on page 90 of this catalogue (plates 66, 67, 68, 69). It would be interesting to confirm whether these craters are actually in the gesso layer, or rather, are within a cream-colored imprimatura selectively laid over the warm-toned gesso in areas intended to be relatively light or pale in the final design.
 28. Again, these preliminary results are the wonderful work of Libby Sheldon, UCL Painting Analysis, London who is completing the examination of cross-sections from the Kress Michelangelo Associate panel.
 29. See Maringer (1996).
 30. Fleischer and Maringer (1990).
 31. See Dunkerton in Hirst and Dunkerton (1994), pp. 94–5. Dunkerton also mentions that a high glue content, effectively an aggressive sealing of the gesso layer, would be quite expected if the artist were preparing to paint in oil, and that Ferrara was one of the earliest centers of oil painting development in Italy.
 32. Dunkerton in Hirst and Dunkerton (1994), p. 92 and Maringer in a personal communication during my visit to Vienna.
 33. It is interesting to note that in the Ambrosiana's *Madonna and Child*, hints of a summary, blackish preparatory drawing can be seen under gallery lighting conditions around the edges of forms such as the Virgin's hands and wrists.
 34. Dunkerton in Hirst and Dunkerton (1994), p. 102.
 35. For the location of gilt details on the *Doni Tondo*, *ibid.*
 36. See Wilde (1959).
 37. For Michael Hirst's recent suggestion that Michelangelo's personal assistant and friend, Piero d'Argenta, may be the Master of the Manchester Madonna or Michelangelo Associate, see Hirst in Hirst and Dunkerton (1994), p. 41, and Agosti and Hirst (1996).
 38. A pentimento of the Kress Virgin's neckline that was revealed in an X-radiograph image of the panel may reflect the Michelangelo Associate's awareness of Michelangelo's sculptural works. The Virgin's red robe in the Kress picture was initially designed with a square neckline that was subsequently changed during the painting process to the "V"-shaped neckline. This pentimento might suggest a relationship between the Kress picture and a shift in tasteful fashion recorded by the different necklines in Michelangelo's *Taddei Tondo*, ca. 1502 and his *Pitti Tondo*, ca. 1503 (see figs 12, 16, and 17). It is known that Michelangelo was keenly aware of contemporary fashions of dress; his later painting, the *Doni Tondo*, also shows an up-to-date V-neckline in the costume of the Madonna.

39. The head of the Madonna in Michelangelo's *Madonna della Scala* seems generally derived from Donatello's famous relief, the *Pazzi Madonna* in the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. However, where Donatello fully describes the Virgin's ear in his image, Michelangelo chose to cover her ear with drapery. In the Kress panel, the Michelangelo Associate has drawn from Michelangelo's design with the ear concealed. Thus, though Freedberg once described the Michelangelo Associate as an artist who seems to have spent many hours studying Donatello, it may be that this hint of Donatello in the Michelangelo Associate's works actually was passed to him through Michelangelo. See Freedberg (1972), p. 256. (The *Madonna della Scala* has also been likened to Donatello's *Dudley Madonna* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Donatello *did* cover the Madonna's ear with drapery in this relief, however its underlying form is clearly indicated in the veil fabric, a detail mimicked by Michelangelo in the *Madonna della Scala* but *not* by the Michelangelo Associate in the Kress painting.)
40. Ghirlandaio, *Drapery Study for a Kneeling Figure*. Inv. 316E (as Mainardi), Gabinetto dei Disegni, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence.
41. Cosmè Tura, *Evangelist*. Gabinetto dei Disegni, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence. This drawing is reproduced in Campbell (2002), p. 161, fig. 73.

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Portrait of a Lady
Nicolaes Maes, 1682
Oil on canvas
47^{3/4} × 39^{3/4} in. (121.2 × 101 cm)
Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, South Carolina
CMA 1962.17 (K-1134)



FIG. 1. *Portrait of a Lady*, before cleaning and restoration.



FIG. 2. *Portrait of a Lady* (fig. 1), after cleaning and restoration.

Portrait of a Lady and Techniques in the Late Paintings of Nicolaes Maes

Laurent Sozzani with Christopher McGlinchey

THE KRESS COLLECTION PAINTING by Nicolaes Maes, *Portrait of a Lady* (figs. 1 and 2), signed and dated 1682, which is now in the Columbia Museum of Art in Columbia, South Carolina, is examined here in the context of other late paintings by Maes. Nicolaes Maes was a premier portrait painter in Holland in the second half of the seventeenth century. Painted during the period in which he devoted himself exclusively to portraiture, the Columbia painting is typical of Nicolaes Maes's later mature style, illustrating his facility for capturing a likeness and rendering rich drapery and background elements with technical economy. Portrait painting techniques and studio practices are discussed in some detail. And an unusual glazing technique used by Maes on numerous paintings including the Columbia *Portrait of a Lady* is discussed here for the first time.

NICOLAES MAES

Nicolaes Maes was born in Dordrecht in 1634. The artist and biographer, Arnold Houbraken (1660–1719), in the closest contemporary account of Nicolaes Maes's life, recorded in the second volume of his three-volume *De Grootte Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen* (1719)¹ that “Maes's early training in drawing was with an unknown ordinary Dordrecht master,” and that later, still as a young man, perhaps between 1646 and 1650, he traveled to Amsterdam where “from Rembrandt he learned painting.”² Exactly how long he spent with Rembrandt is unknown; however, through Maes's marriage it is

documented that he had returned to Dordrecht by 1654, where he worked as an independent painter. In 1673, he moved back to Amsterdam, to live and work until his death in 1693.³

During his early period, Maes ranked among the most innovative of Dutch genre painters, depicting interior scenes not only within the usual simple, three-walled spatial arrangements, but also in suites of rooms that were better suited to his intended narratives of the intrigues of everyday domestic life. His numerous depictions of eavesdroppers, painted between 1655 and 1657, best exemplify this compositional arrangement. This design innovation exercised a decisive influence on Delft painters such as Pieter de Hooch (1629–1683) and Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675), and had a lasting impact on seventeenth-century Dutch paintings of interiors. Rembrandt's influence is recognizable in Maes's early genre paintings in the use of isolated areas of opaque color and a rich chiaroscuro to render forms and their spatial relationships.⁴ The use of a restricted palette, rich in browns and reds, is also characteristic of these early paintings.

His early portraits, those from the 1650s, also show a degree of indebtedness to Rembrandt. However, by the 1660s Maes had moved away from Rembrandt's style and what he may have considered a more staid type of portraiture and began to develop a more "van Dyckian" style. In Houbraken we read that Maes "learned . . . painting from Rembrandt but soon gave up this way of painting, particularly when he devoted himself to portraiture and saw that young girls, especially, take more pleasure being shown in white than in brown."⁵

Houbraken also records that Maes had a good character, worked hard and was serious in developing himself as an artist; he adds that Maes visited Antwerp where he was able to see the works of Rubens, van Dyck, and other masters. During that visit he also met with artists including Jacob Jordaens (1593–1678). This visit is enlivened with a conversation in which Jordaens asks Maes, "What do you make?" and upon Maes's reply of "I am a portrait painter," Jordaens comments, "Brother, I have pity on you, for you are one of

the martyred."⁶ Even if the visit took place, it is uncertain whether Houbraken could really have known of the conversation. Rather, Houbraken seems to use the conversation to both acknowledge Maes as a portrait painter whom he admires and as an opportune way to expound on the prevailing theory of the hierarchy of pictorial genres.

Though the Antwerp trip has been considered a major reason for Maes's shift in style, the change is more likely derived from the influence of Adrian Hanneman (1601–1671) and Jan Mijtens (1614–1670) among others, who were Dutch proponents and followers of what was then becoming an international "van Dyckian" style. Both Hanneman and Mijtens worked in The Hague, not far from Dordrecht, and both worked primarily as portrait painters. Their portraits relied heavily on Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641), and Hanneman especially is credited with playing a major role in disseminating van Dyck's influence throughout Holland.⁷ During his stay in Amsterdam, Maes would also have had the opportunity to become familiar with the work of Jan Lievens (1607–1674), Bartholomeus van der Helst (1613–1670), Ferdinand Bol (1616–1680), and Govert Flink (1615–1660), who were also incorporating the Flemish style into their work.

By the time he returned to Dordrecht around 1654, Nicolaes Maes had begun to devote himself to portrait painting. It is not difficult to imagine that the younger Maes, in pursuing his career and looking to a more classicist style, would have come under the influence of other successful portraitists and begun painting in a style that has since been considered a reflection of the national spirit of the times.⁸ By the 1660s Maes devoted himself exclusively to portrait painting. These portraits depict the well-to-do, usually dressed in the formal costume of the day and set in sumptuous, often brightly colored backgrounds. They began to become standardized, depicting different sitters in similar poses, with similar details in clothing, attributes, and surroundings.

An overview of the body of Maes's early genre paintings reveals a limited number of subjects and their frequent repetition.⁹ One can imagine the

ease with which Maes would later develop as a portraitist content with repeating similar pictorial elements over and over. Such repetition would have been a necessary requirement for a prolific production. It is just this sensibility that contributed to the lower status given to portraiture in the theory of painting hierarchy alluded to by Houbraken when he wrote about Maes's visit with Jordaens. In comparison to the creative freedom a history painter had in depicting noble and learned subjects, the portrait painter's subordination of the imagination in capturing the likeness of the sitter and the constant repetition of settings is one reason for the differences in status.

Using a system described here as a fill-in method, a painter might have a few different standard-size pre-prepared supports, any number of stock poses, and a variety of standard drapery types and backgrounds that could be adapted according to the wishes and budget of the client. In a limited number of sittings, organized both for the comfort of the sitter and the demands of the painting technique (such as the need for a paint layer to dry before subsequent paint can be applied), the face and possibly the hands would be completed. Then the painting could be finished through the addition of the costume and background without the sitter's presence.¹⁰ Though his style continued to change, it appears that Maes worked in this way for the rest of his career.

By the 1670s Maes had developed a new portrait style in which very elegantly and colorfully dressed sitters were placed against architectural elements often leading to a view of a pastoral landscape. Changes in costume types typify this shift. Under the influence of English and Flemish fashions, Maes begins to dress his sitters in what was later described by Gerard de Lairesse in his *Het Groot Schilderboek* (Amsterdam, 1707) as "the Painter-like or antique manner, but by the ignorant Commonalty, the Roman Manner," which "signifies, a loose, Airy Undress, somewhat favoring the Mode, but in no wise way agreeing with the ancient Roman Habit."¹¹ Lairesse credits Lely as the originator of the "antique manner" of dress, whereas Sir William Sanderson writing fifty

years earlier more correctly credits van Dyck as the "First Painter that e'er put Ladies dresse into a careless Romance."¹² This sort of dress is seen in the Maes portraits of *Simon van Alphen* (fig. 3) and another *Portrait of a Lady*, possibly Mary Stuart (fig. 4).

In 1673 Nicolaes Maes returned to Amsterdam where his success as a portrait painter continued unabated until his death in 1693. As Houbraken further recorded:

Having settled in Amsterdam, so much work came his way that it was deemed a favor if one person was granted the opportunity to sit for his portrait before another, and so it remained until the end of his life, which is why he left a large number of portraits incomplete [at his death].¹³

In conjunction with this success, Maes utilized a variety of techniques that allowed him to rapidly achieve the desired luminosity and rich finish of his pictures. His working method may also have contributed to the number of incomplete works in his studio after he died.



FIG. 3. *Portrait of Simon van Alphen*, Nicolaes Maes, ca. 1677, oil on canvas, 28 1/8 x 22 1/2 in. (71.5 x 57 cm). Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



FIG. 4. *Portrait of a Lady* (possibly *Mary Stuart*), Nicolaes Maes, ca. 1677, oil on canvas, 27 × 22 1/4 in. (68.7 × 56.5 cm). Timken Museum of Art, San Diego, CA.

THE KRESS COLLECTION *PORTRAIT OF A LADY*

The Kress/Columbia picture, painted in Maes's mature style, is signed and dated "N Maes 1682." The identity of the sitter, an older woman of some means, is unknown.¹⁴ It is likely that she is a widow, recognized as such by the mourning clothes she wears, which include a widow's peak of black lace (*tipmuts* in Dutch) partially covering her hair and perhaps the single golden band on the index finger of her right hand. A white blouse and a gray scarf accent a black silk or satin dress. The absence of lace in the white blouse could indicate that she is in a later stage of mourning.¹⁵ It is also possible that, as an older woman, she is dressing in the fashion that was prevalent when she was young.

To her left, an open view of the sky indicates that she is either in front of a window or on an open balcony. Muted reds and browns dominate the background. A dark red curtain billows across the top and down the right side of the

composition. A table at her left and a chair, partially visible on her right, are also painted in red. All architectural elements are in muted browns. The subdued tone of the compositional elements and background contribute to the possibility of her being a widow.

The *Portrait of a Lady* was examined at the Columbia Museum of Art, while the majority of the other Maes paintings discussed here were examined at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

THE PAINTER'S TECHNIQUE

Support

The *Portrait of a Lady* is painted on a single piece of plain weave linen canvas now measuring 121.2 × 101 cm. Though he occasionally painted on wood supports, Maes favored canvas for his paintings, both large and small. The large format of this painting—one of the larger portraits in his oeuvre—implies an important commission. The size corresponds closely to a contemporary English standard size for three-quarter standing or sitting portraits, 127 × 101 cm.¹⁶

Comparing the sizes of approximately 300 portraits by Maes from after 1655, estimated as one-third of his total output,¹⁷ we see that only thirty-two paintings are larger. Of these, only six are significantly larger, and only two of the six portray single sitters. Another thirty paintings are only slightly smaller. This group of approximately sixty paintings is relatively close in size to the Columbia painting. Together they create a cluster of pictures with one dimension measuring near 107 cm and the other being proportional. In seventeenth-century Holland, cloth was woven on loom widths measured in units of ells and/or half ells; 107 cm approximates the seventeenth-century measuring unit for cloth 1.5 ells wide. This was the width of a standard bed sheet in Holland and one of the most common loom sizes in use in the seventeenth century.¹⁸ Using the entire width of cloth as one of the dimensions for a painting would minimize waste, and standardizing sizes could further reduce the time and material needed to prepare the canvas for painting.¹⁹

Preparation

The Columbia picture was prepared with a single ground layer. An admixture of earth colors and black and white pigments resulting in a warm buff color was used. This color is common not only in other Maes paintings, but also in the period. It is often found alone or over a first ground that would have been applied to fill and reduce the texture of the weave of the fabric support.²⁰ The tone of the ground plays an important part in the final appearance of the painting where thinly applied upper layers rely on the luminosity of the ground color. This is often the case in quickly or loosely rendered backgrounds and is true of the architectural elements in the Columbia picture. Where visible, as in shadows or where a reserved area was left unpainted, the ground may be only lightly or partially scumbled or glazed over. This slight addition of an overlaid color integrates these areas into the composition. The shadows of the neck and nose of the sitter are created with only



FIG. 5. *Portrait of a Lady* (fig. 1), detail of shadow under the sleeve of the blouse on the proper right arm created by light semi-transparent scumbling over ground.



FIG. 6. *Portrait of a Lady* (fig. 1), detail showing opaquely painted shadow under the sleeve of the blouse on the proper left arm.

light modeling and glazing with a semi-transparent dark color over the ground. The shadow of her proper right arm under the sleeve of the blouse is also only lightly covered ground color, but the same shadow on her proper left arm is opaquely painted in a warm pink (figs. 5 and 6).

Underpainting

Infrared reflectograms of other Maes paintings show what appears to be a broadly applied underpainting for the portrait.²¹ Though not read as a detailed sketch (detailed linear underdrawing in a Maes portrait has yet to be observed), the image visible in infrared reflectography (IRR) may have served as the primary rendering for the position, basic form and proportions of the composition. Some broad underpaint lines can also be seen in costumes. Maes could have made a more detailed sketch in chalk or another material, such as a thin umber paint, that is neither visible in the finished picture nor with IRR. The lack of detailed preparatory drawings for portraits by Maes suggests that he sketched his designs directly onto the prepared canvas. Although no examination with IRR was carried out on the Columbia painting, in the face of the *Portrait of a Lady*, a dark tone is slightly visible through thinner areas of the flesh paint and through open cracks giving the impression of the presence of an underpainting. Similar underpaint can be seen in the face, neck, and chest in a smaller painting

by Maes, the portrait of *Belchje Hulft* (fig. 7). An IRR image of the Hulft portrait (fig. 8) gives a clearer idea of what is partially visible to the naked eye in both paintings. A large paint loss in the same painting clearly reveals the underpaint used to indicate the oval surround of that portrait (fig. 9). Similar underpaint can also be seen in an unpainted area of the iris of Hulft's proper right eye.

PORTRAITURE

Maes's portraits are carefully rendered and give the impression of having been painted quickly, wet-in-wet, with careful blending of every brushstroke. Though many wet-in-wet passages can be found, especially in the costumes and background, it is probable that the build-up in the face is the result of a patient paint application, in which delicate hatching was used to blend together previously applied patches of color. When they were dry, or at least partially dry, Maes could repeat that process using similar colors, again hatched together, and then further integrated with final glazes and scumbles.

Portrait sittings at the time were shorter than one might imagine: a portrait could be painted in three to four sittings of one to two hours. The sittings would be spaced to allow time for paint to dry sufficiently before the next sitting.²²

Though scant, period descriptions of portrait painting do provide insight into the techniques used to achieve the final appearance in a portrait. Kirby Talley, in his thesis, *Portrait Painting in England: Studies in the Technical Literature Before 1700*,²³ has distilled and collated the notes of many early writers into a useful reference. Many of the portrait painters working in England during the seventeenth century were from the Continent, and their techniques would be those they learned at home. In general, Dutch painting techniques such as those used by Nicolaes Maes are similar to those of artists who traveled to work in England.²⁴

By correlating contemporary sources with observations of related portrait paintings, a general description of the portrait painting process



FIG. 7. *Portrait of Belchje Hulft*, Nicolaes Maes, ca. 1680, oil on canvas, 17 1/2 × 13 in. (44.5 × 33.1 cm). Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



FIG. 8. *Portrait of Belchje Hulft* (fig. 7), infrared reflectogram composite showing broad underdrawing of the face and chest as well as finer sketched lines for the costume.

can be pieced together. Over the broad but accurate guide of the underpainting (or underdrawing), the first application of the flesh tones was made. Often referred to as the dead coloring, this paint would be applied in broad patches of light and shadow placed adjacent to one another, in colors closely approximating the intended modeled final tones. These brushstrokes were laid next to, not over, each other just as Sir Peter Lely (1618–1680) advised a Mr. Fever, “lay on your patches of colouring one by another & not colour upon colour, & only hack them together & keep them beautiful and clear.”²⁵ Careful hatching was an important step addressed by many authors. Daniel King in his *Secrets* manuscript in a section on oil painting, states that after laying in the separate patches of flesh tones for the basic shadows and highlights, the areas would be carefully blended “by which means the colors incorporate & the faintness of the colors is taken away,”²⁶ that is, the differences between these patches of color resulting from the quick application would be reduced. This process is called sweetening and is done to blend the colors, creating an effect as if “they were all laid on at once and not at several times.”²⁷ Marshall Smith, a gentleman writer, in *The Art of Painting*,²⁸ printed in 1692 in London, warns that in hatching the colors into one another you must use “a light Hand, taking great care that you strike not the Shaddows so far, to foul the Lights, nor the Lights so as to Injure the

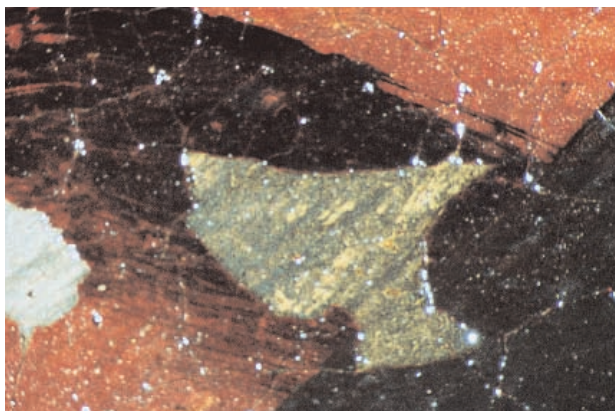


FIG. 9. *Portrait of Belchje Hulft* (fig. 7), detail of underpaint indicating the oval surround seen through a paint loss.



FIG. 10. *Self Portrait*, Casper Netscher, ca. 1670, oil on oak panel, 11 × 8 5/8 in. (28 × 22 cm). Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Detail showing the palette and many brushes.

Shaddows.”²⁹ Sweetening was facilitated by the use of many paint brushes, one for each different color—each one kept clean for the use of a different color. Indeed, one sees that numerous brushes are routinely represented in addition to the artist’s palette when these are depicted in self-portraits or portraits of artists (fig. 10).

Once dried, the dead coloring could be smoothed and rubbed “very thin over with a mixture of Nut-Oyle and varnish, for too much will change the Colour”³⁰ and the painting process repeated, with even greater care, to produce the desired final effects. The initial broad paint application can often be discerned by identifying bolder brushstrokes where the colors differ more distinctly from one another. The



FIG. 11. *Portrait of Belchje Hulft* (fig. 7), detail, photomicrograph of the proper right eyebrow showing the fine hatching used to blend the flesh tone into the shadow of the eyebrow.

finer brushstrokes used in the sweetening in most paintings are difficult to see but occasionally fine hatching can be found leading into and out of shadows. Over time the fine brushstrokes may be even more difficult to observe if the impasto has been softened and flattened through aggressive restoration interventions. In a photomicrograph from the *Portrait of Belchje Hulft*, it is possible to see some brushstrokes of fine hatching as well as the scattered pigments of final glazes (fig. 11).

An X-radiograph can be helpful in revealing the brushwork and deciphering patterns of paint application. Contemporary descriptions of palettes prepared for portrait painting often refer to the tempering of a primary white mixture with other colors to create the different tones needed.³¹ Willem Beurs, the author of *De Grootte Waereld in 't kleen geschildert*, published in Amsterdam in 1692, devotes a short chapter to the painting of “living persons.”³² In describing a simplified palette for this, Beurs lists thirteen color mixtures,³³ nine of which contain white—most likely lead white. The presence and relative thickness of lead white is primarily what is read in an X-radiograph.

In the X-radiograph of the face of the *Portrait of a Lady* it is possible to decipher broader, thicker brushstrokes that have been blended together by finer brushstrokes (fig. 12). The rougher appearance of the paint application in the X-radiograph is accounted for by the numerous individual

brushstrokes of paint. This differs significantly from the fine blending of the colors visible in the finished painting. In the X-radiograph, the application of lead-rich flesh color is seen as less dense in shadow areas where the ground and/or under-paint played a greater role in the modeling.

In Maes's pendant portraits of Elizabeth van der Meer and Maarten Pauw (figs. 13 and 14), the initial broad patches of flesh-color paint are visible on the surface. The colors are not as fully blended together. This is especially so at the contours of the shadows.

In Maes's paintings, finished details such as eyes, nose, and lips that may have been partially indicated as areas of reserve as a portrait progressed, were finished only shortly before the surface completely dried. As the face was finished the hair was laid in. In the X-radiograph of the face of the *Columbia* portrait, a slight outline of the outer form of the hair and an extension of the forehead to the right are visible. This outlining



FIG. 12. *Portrait of a Lady* (fig. 1), X-radiograph, detail of the face showing the finer brushwork found in the structure of the painting.



FIG. 13. *Portrait of Elizabeth van der Meer* (pendant to *Maarten Pauw*), Nicolaes Maes, oil on oak panel, 17³/₈ × 12¹/₄ in. (44 × 31.2 cm). Collection of Pauw van Wieldrecht, The Netherlands.



FIG. 14. *Portrait of Maarten Pauw* (pendant to *Elizabeth van der Meer*), Nicolaes Maes, oil on oak panel, 17³/₈ × 12¹/₄ in. (44 × 31.2 cm). Collection of Pauw van Wieldrecht, The Netherlands.

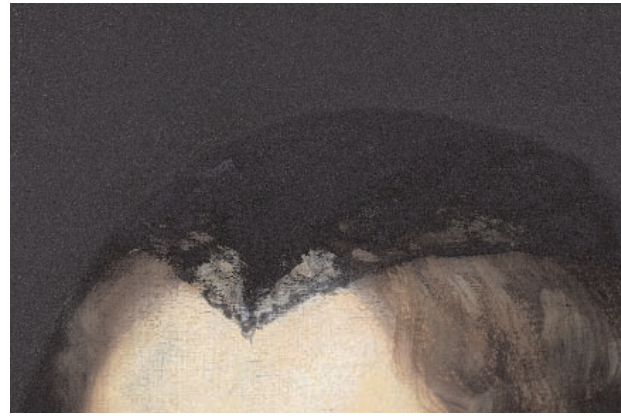


FIG. 15. *Portrait of a Lady* (fig. 1), detail of the widow's peak showing the reintroduction of flesh-colored paint that creates the lace pattern on the forehead.

may indicate that some fundamental drawing was done with a lead-based, flesh-colored paint. The lighter paint on the right extends, for example, under the edge of the hair and indicates the shape of the head. Over this light underpaint, the hair was painted in; this created more contrast and visibility of the strands of hair than if they were painted directly onto the darker ground or a dark underpaint. When modeling the face, a reserve, visible in the X-radiograph, was left for the point of the lace widow's peak. The point of the reserve is rounder than the point created by the subsequently applied black lace. After painting in the black lace it was necessary to recreate its transparency. To achieve this, flesh color was reintroduced over the widow's peak (fig. 15). This paint was wetter and slightly darker than the first flesh paint applications and, as can be seen in the X-radiograph, contained less of the white lead pigment.

While Maes painted the face in the Columbia picture, he darkened the background to the left and above the sitter with an arc of dense brown paint. This corrected the contour of the cheek and gave more contrast to the left side of the face against the background. This type of adjusting or outlining is not unusual and is often seen in both finished and unfinished portraits by many painters. In this portrait, similar paint may also have been used at the same stage to indicate the architectural forms and the shapes of the curtain,

table, and chair. Further analysis might reveal that this paint is directly related to the previously described dark underpaint of the figure. Darker contour lines that are clearly visible within the architecture and along the edges of the curtain are partially painted over. Some of these lines continue under the costume, indicating their role in the initial laying-in of the composition.

The costume and background were often secondary to the portrait. It was not uncommon for a busy portraitist to employ assistants or even professional drapery painters to complete compositions after the portraits were laid in. Little is known of Maes's studio, and there is no record of how it operated. Only a few possible students or assistants have been identified.³⁴

Given the number of paintings currently attributed to Maes, he could have done all the portrait work himself. It has been estimated that during his most productive years he would have had to complete only one portrait every two weeks.³⁵ The account by Houbraken of many unfinished paintings being left in his studio when Maes died seems unfounded, unless they were later finished, if not by other artists, then by one or more assistants. Though it has also been argued that the simplification and repetition of Maes's later paintings indicates the probable use of assistants, no evidence for this exists either.³⁶ On the contrary, Maes's display of skill in portraiture and his ability—in his later works—to integrate the costumes and backgrounds so well with the portrait indicates that even the strong stylization was a personal choice. The simplicity of the techniques employed seems quite intentional, making it unlikely that assistants were needed to complete his works.

With great economy Maes could create dazzling effects in both simple and very fanciful dress with little effort. The costume and background of the Columbia *Portrait of a Lady* are painted with just such skillful simplicity.

As a general practice, the face and hands were finished first, after which the costume and background would be painted in. In most cases this is seen in the overlapping of paint at the transitions.



FIG. 16. *Portrait of a Lady* (fig. 1), detail of the stylized paint application used to render the dress.

This sequence is evident in the Columbia painting where it appears that the costume was completed before the background, though some indications for the background were in place before the costume was painted. Confusion as to the order of painting can arise when transitions are subsequently carefully covered or sharpened with additional paint after two adjacent areas have been completed.

It is clear in the Columbia painting, however, that after completing the face and hands and before painting the black dress, Maes painted the sleeves and neck of the white blouse and then the scarf. To paint the scarf, somewhat dry gray paint was applied in long brushstrokes, which skipped along, leaving the paint and even the ground below slightly exposed. This gives the scarf a light transparent appearance. The highlights and final touches of the shawl, which extend over and along the transition of the black dress, were added after he completed the dress.

The painting of the dress is not literally descriptive but schematic with an abstract quality (fig. 16).³⁷ This is especially true in the area to the right, below the hand, where the folds of the cloth are difficult to interpret. This daring show of bravura must be by Maes himself. It is difficult to imagine that such a schematic design on an important commission would be acceptable to the patron if either an assistant or a professional drapery painter had worked on it.

In painting the larger areas of the dress, the gray and black must have been laid in simultaneously, in no specific order, leaving reserves for one color next to the other. In the largest expanse of gray, that of the bodice and the proper right sleeve, the black touches indicating folds and seams were applied over the gray. Elsewhere the black and gray cover more equal areas, and the two colors were laid on in alternating bands that were then blended together wet-in-wet, sometimes with the black over and into the gray and sometimes vice versa. Small areas of uncovered ground can occasionally be found between the two colors. Black lines were then used to indicate the seams, to clarify the forms of the folds, and to sharpen the outer edges of the dress. The white highlights were added last. Finally, black was also used to sharpen the final contours of the white blouse, the scarf, and the hands and wrists.

The much smaller portrait of Elizabeth van der Meer (see fig. 13), who also wears a black costume, was painted in the same general sequence. The dress is simpler in design with a plain black bodice and only minimal gray highlights to create volume. In this small scale the execution does not have the extreme abstraction found in the Columbia dress, but it too has a schematic quality.

The background of the Columbia painting is created with similar economy. Immediately behind the sitter's head, the area was evidently quickly covered, filling in the architectural elements without fully resolving the forms. Only scant shading and a few darker, drawn lines create any illusion of depth. The paint is lighter than the dark brown used to correct the contour of the face and extends over it. This brown is lighter because of the inclusion of clearly visible large particles of coarsely ground lead white. Had he used more finely ground white pigment the effect would have been different.

The sky is also schematically rendered and painted like many of Maes's skies. The colors have a dark appearance that contributes to the overall subdued tone of the background. The pigment smalt, ground from glass colored with cobalt oxide, here mixed with lamp black and lead

white, dominates the bluer areas of the sky. In the Columbia painting the smalt, which is prone to color change in an oil medium, appears to have faded.³⁸ The increased translucency of the pigment and yellowing of the oil medium give the sky a somewhat muddied appearance. However, despite the discoloration, the light tone of sky creates a balanced composition with other high-lighted background elements that surround the sitter.

The curtain, chair, and table are quickly executed with broad shadows, abstracted highlights, and monochromatic mid-tones. A minimum of detail is found in the highlights of the chair and in the folds of the cloths. What may be a book on the table under the sitter's elbow is hardly recognizable as such. The broad mid-tones of the curtain and the back of the chair are accentuated with a free application of a light brown paint containing the same discrete, large, white particles found in the architecture. In all its applications, that brown paint extends slightly over the previously rendered contours including the edges of the hair and the costume.

Over the entire curtain, the chair, and the table, Maes applied an even layer of monochromatic red glaze. What appears as almost amateur or perhaps incomplete was, however, calculated to achieve a particular finished effect. The red increases the depth of the darkest shadows and is most vivid over the highlights. It is subtler over the brown mid-tones, but there the overall effect of the red color is increased by the reflectance of light off the large white pigment particles and back through the transparent red glaze.

THE UNUSUAL TECHNIQUE OF OVERALL GLAZING WITH RED

This technique would be an anomaly if found only on this picture; or it could be a quick trick by someone other than the artist to finish a painting or to cover damage from a harsh cleaning. But this technique of complete glazing has been observed on other Maes paintings where it creates an even more dramatic effect.³⁹ Maes uses this technique for its economy, quickly bringing bril-

liant red coloring over previously modeled forms. In rendering such colored fabrics he not only follows traditional techniques but takes glazing a step further.

Could this be a unique innovation by Nicolaes Maes? In the Columbia portrait, as in other Maes paintings, all the modeling for this particular red glazing technique is done in the underpainting. The red glaze is freely applied over the modeling without any consideration for the forms below. It is used only to give the final overall color. The form of the drapery relies entirely on the underpaint.

Generally speaking, in easel painting, color glazes are used either to delineate design motifs (as in brocades), to locally add color or shadow to underpainted modeling, or to actually model final forms. When intensifying the color or shadow of previously applied undermodeling, the glaze is usually applied in a painterly manner following the underlying modeling, denser (usually thicker) over shadows, lighter (usually thinner) over mid-tones and highlights. The same is generally true when using a translucent color in conjunction with other colors to initially build a form or when the glaze alone is used to model a form. Maes also used translucent paints in these other ways. For example, the coat in the portrait of Maarten Pauw (see fig. 14) is modeled only with red lake paint mixtures. In that painting, subtle mixtures of a red lake, black, and other light-colored pigments are applied directly over the ground, to model the sitter's coat. No underpainting or undermodeling was used. In other instances Maes would complete a drapery and then with a similar transparent color, glaze over the highlights only.

Maes's application of the red glaze over a fully developed and modeled drapery is not unusual. Overall applications of glazes coloring undermodeled drapery are often noted in sixteenth-century Venetian paintings⁴⁰ as well as in the works of painters directly influenced by them. However, these artists invariably used the glaze to accentuate the form with thicker and thinner applications following shadows and highlights.

Maes is unusual in that he boldly applied the red glaze *uniformly* over the *entire* underpainting with *no variation in either color or density* of the glaze in relation to the shadows or highlights below. The initially modeled drapery thus becomes a complete underpainting. Future research may reveal that Maes also used the technique for colors other than red and that other artists also used similar techniques.⁴¹

EXAMPLES OF GLAZING FROM EARLY LITERATURE

The transparent red pigments used during this period were made from various natural dyestuffs, artificially extracted and precipitated onto a substrate.⁴² Analysis of samples of the transparent red from Maes's paintings, including the Columbia *Portrait of a Lady* indicate that his red contains carminic acid derived from the cochineal insect.⁴³ After 1600, cochineal and brazilwood imported from the New World became the predominant source materials for red dyes and the manufacture of red lake pigments used in western Europe. Cochineal, however, was the red colorant of choice for painters, as brazilwood was unstable and faded rapidly when used in painting. Numerous early literary references to glazing correspond to what is found in the glazing technique used by Maes.⁴⁴

In 1649, for example, Francisco Pacheco refers to painting various red draperies and comments on the quality of cochineal red. He gives instructions for different *bosquexo* (a more or less finished underpainting) that can be glazed or left unglazed. For a red glaze in oil, he suggests the use of carmine from Florence or maybe Honduras, both of which he states are better than that from the Indies. One suggestion for painting a crimson cloth reads, "model with vermilion and carmine, adding lead white or a little black as desired . . . when dry, glaze once or twice with good Florentine carmine." Further he discusses the importance of using good quality colors and "to wash the painting before glazing so the glaze will spread over it."⁴⁵

A much earlier reference to glazing from Gian Paolo Lomazzo's *Scritti sulle arti*, 1584 (translated

in 1598 as *A Tracte Containing the Artes of Curious Painting, Carvinge & Buildinge*), gives a description close to what we observe in Maes though it refers only to the painting of gems and other transparent bodies. Lomazzo states that the form of the object is first underpainted in dead colors and “afterwards laxeered over with simple, pure and clear lake, which doth most artificially represent those lights and shadows, which in thruth are not there . . .”⁴⁶

Another early reference, found in the *Arts of Poetry, and Painting and Symetry, with Principles of Perspective* (1615) by Filipe Nunes, also gives general glazing instructions in a section on “How to Glaze.” Referring first to using green verdigris,⁴⁷ he instructs:

first paint evenly in white and “preto” (a dark brown or black tone) that which you wish to glaze, and see that you make the highlights quite white and the darks quite dark. After it is good and dry . . . you can glaze it this way: Wrap a bit of cotton with a bit of very soft linen cloth, making a kind of brush . . . As you spread the verdigris you will see the lights appear as greens and the darks appear as dark greens.

Though he is describing verdigris, he follows with, “The same can be done with lacra.”⁴⁸

In the well-known De Mayerne tract, *Pictoria Sculptoria & quae subalternarum artium* (1620), a recognized compilation of techniques from various sources, glazing technique is noted in a section on the working of various colors. This includes a red “Laque” that can be glazed in one of two manners with a “clean brush” or, as described by Nunes, “. . . with a shredded clothe with cotton inside . . .” Over a dead color rendering done with a mixture of lac, white, and brown, “. . . make a glaze of beautiful lac . . . and after on the glaze you can further lighten and darken.”⁴⁹

The Harley treatise (1664) also refers to using a cloth to glaze overall, “when it [the undermodeling] is dry glaze it over with faire lake, that is, strike it thereon allover & rub it all over with a little stuff with cotton, this is make ye lake even.”⁵⁰

Karel van Mander in 1618 gave a direct descrip-

tion for glazing drapery, though without going into detail as to color build-up: “to paint beautiful drapery, place your first layers in a suitable color and only then glaze, and if it works, you can bring about a glowing transparency of velvet and beautiful satins.”⁵¹

Many of the authors seem to borrow from previous ones. The material in many treatises on painting methods and materials was often copied from one to the next with slight variations, additions, and deletions. Marshall Smith, in the previously mentioned *Art of Painting*, was aware of this as a potential problem when he wrote in his preface:

I Expect a full cry of Critticks, a Plagiary! A Plagiary! but first hear my Confession. I have taken several things from Lomazzo, Vincent, Teftling and others . . . I have taken all that is Necessary, Corrected divers Errours, and added many things, not (to my Knowledge) Publish'd before.

In writing on glazing he repeats and elaborates on his predecessors. Detailing underpaint colors he writes:

for Scarlet, your drapery must be in the heights, Vermillion, and brought down first with Indian Red, then with Bone-Black: when Finish'd, Glaze it twice or thrice thin, according to the Body of your Lake . . . always remembering, that you Glaze not the Heightenings where there is any white, by reason it will render it Purpleish and take away the Beauty.⁵²

The warning regarding purple, though important for producing a good red, was also exploited by painters who wanted to produce purple drapery.

Reglazing or repainting to intensify the color over a glazed area is often mentioned. This makes it more difficult to recognize an overall glaze application. This could be especially true when shadows are added as mentioned by Jose Garcia Hidalgo in 1693, “if a carmesi is desired glaze it over once or twice with good fine carmine and reinforce the darkest shadows with lamp-black . . .”⁵³ In fact, Maes does use this technique of reinforcement of a shadow over the initial



FIG. 17. *Portrait of Simon van Alphen* (fig. 3), UV photograph showing the fluorescence of the red glazed mantle; note the black underpaint at the edges of the mantle, reinforcement to a shadow below the hand, and the painterly application of a brown glaze over the background, notably where brushed out onto the sky.



FIG. 18. *Portrait of Belchje Hulft* (fig. 7), UV photograph showing the fluorescence of the red glazed mantle; its imprecise application can be noted along the edges.

overall glaze application.

COMPARATIVE GLAZING IN PAINTINGS BY NICOLAES MAES

Clearer examples of how Maes's technique accords with these descriptions can be found in two unrelated portraits, those of Simon van Alphen (see fig. 3) and Belchje Hulft (see fig. 7). Red is the dominant color in the costumes in both of these portraits. The glaze application can clearly be seen where distinct brushstrokes of the red glaze are visible in normal light and by the overall appearance of the glaze in ultraviolet (uv) fluorescence (figs. 17 and 18).

Under uv light the outline of the glaze covering Simon van Alphen's mantle does not exactly follow the outline of the underpainted garment. The darker color at the edge of the glaze is the underpaint without the telltale fluorescence of the glaze over it. The darker diagonal strip in the middle right is a reinforcement of the underlying shadow added, as noted by Hidalgo, over the red glazing. In a detail from the mantle (fig. 19), the pattern of the brushstroke of the red is clearly visible crossing over the undermodeling and perpendicular to it. Cross-sections of paint samples from the Alphen portrait show the paint build-up and the location of evenly applied red glaze (figs. 20A–B and 21A–B). Here the red glaze is clearly visible as a distinct uniform layer. It can also be seen that Maes often used the same translucent red pigment either alone or mixed with other colors, predominantly vermilion and red earth pigments, to build the undermodeling of the drapery. Both the high concentration of medium and nature of the pigment used cause this glaze to be strikingly visible in uv light. However, the green fluorescence seen in the painting in uv light is similar to an oxidized natural resin or oil varnish and is, therefore, easily masked by the thinnest oxidized varnish layer. Once this technique was identified in a painting being restored (and from which the old oxidized varnish layers had been removed), it was not difficult to recognize this technique in many of Maes's paintings.

In the *Portrait of Belchje Hulft* (see fig. 7), the red



FIG. 19. *Portrait of Simon van Alphen* (fig. 3), detail of the free brushstroke of red glaze crossing perpendicular over the folds of the underpainted mantle.

mantle crossing her bodice is also fully modeled in the underpaint and then glazed overall. This and the area of red to the right in the background both have the characteristic UV fluorescence of the red lake. However, in the red in the background, which is meant to be in shadow, there is no obvious undermodeling. For a more subdued effect the red was applied directly over a thin underpaint, uniformly, with little or no painterly effect, as it was in the background of the Columbia painting. In normal light the background red is not as brilliant as the foreground red. The brilliance of Belchje Hulft's mantle, on the other hand, is the result of the high key of the fully modeled underpaint colors. The differences in the paint layers creating these effects can be seen in paint cross-sections taken from both the fore-

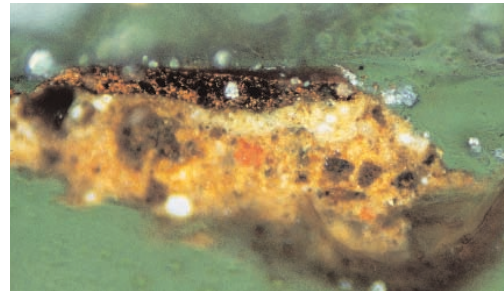


FIG. 20A. *Portrait of Simon van Alphen* (fig. 3), cross-section (200x) from a middle tone area in the red mantle.

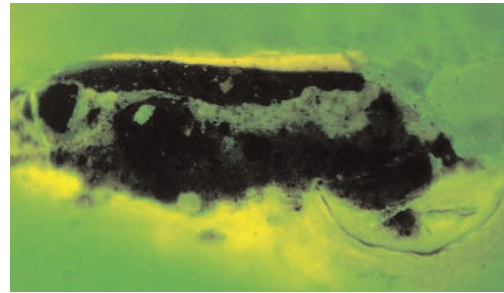


FIG. 20B. *Portrait of Simon van Alphen* (fig. 3), cross-section (200x) in UV light from a middle tone area in the red mantle.

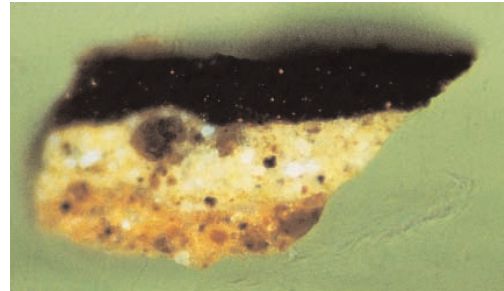


FIG. 21A. *Portrait of Simon van Alphen* (fig. 3), cross-section (200x) from the reinforced shadow in the red mantle.

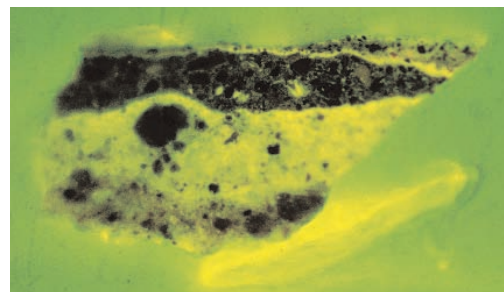


FIG. 21B. *Portrait of Simon van Alphen* (fig. 3), cross-section (200x) in UV light from the reinforced shadow in the red mantle; red glaze is visible between layers, under the black.

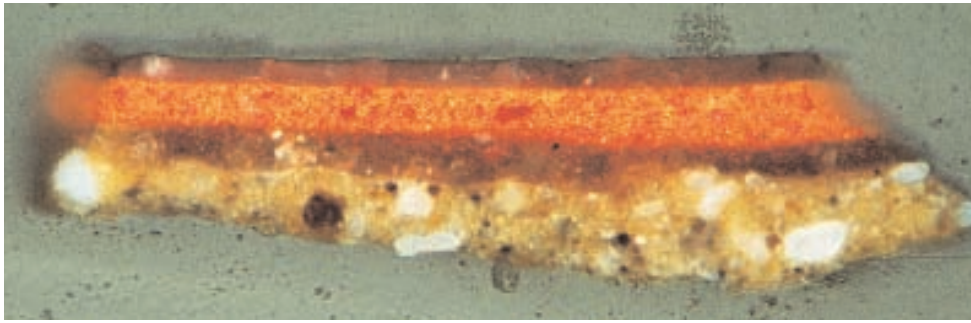


FIG. 22A. *Portrait of Belchje Hulft* (fig. 7), cross-section (200×) from a highlight of the red mantle.

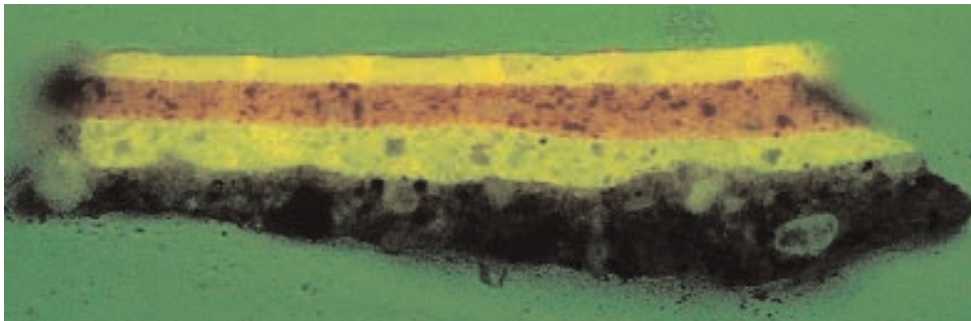


FIG. 22B. *Portrait of Belchje Hulft* (fig. 7), cross-section (200×) in UV light from a highlight of the red mantle.

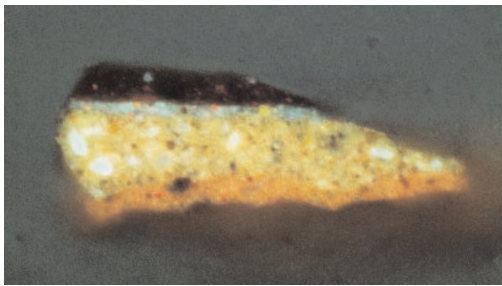


FIG. 23A. *Portrait of Belchje Hulft* (fig. 7), cross-section (200×) of the background with red glaze directly over only a thin paint layer and the ground.

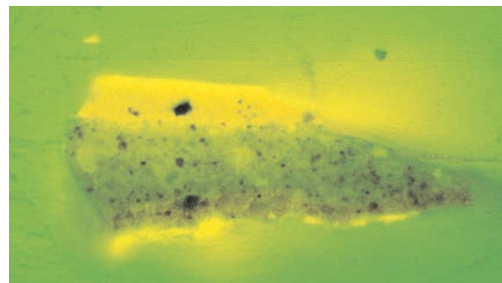


FIG. 23B. *Portrait of Belchje Hulft* (fig. 7), cross-section (200×) in UV light of the background with red glaze directly over a thin paint layer and the ground.

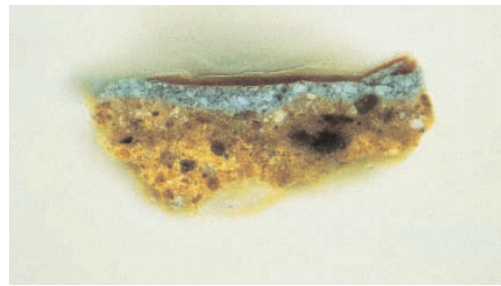


FIG. 24A. *Portrait of a Lady* (fig. 1), cross-section (200×) of the red curtain taken from the upper tacking edge of the painting.

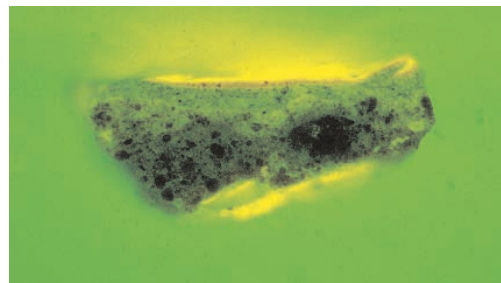


FIG. 24B. *Portrait of a Lady* (fig. 1), cross-section (200×) in UV light of the red curtain taken from the upper tacking edge of the painting.

ground and background areas of the red mantle of the Hulft portrait (figs. 22A–B and 23A–B). Further, the build-up of the red background paint in the Hulft painting and the red in a sample from the background of the Columbia picture (figs. 24A–B) are similar. Marshall Smith, whose 1692 treatise has already been cited, noted the obvious in a section on glazing in his book, in that “the same Ground by the diversity of Glazing Colours, produceth divers Colours in Drapery; likewise the Glazing Colours by diversity of Grounds.”⁵⁴

An apt illustration of the simplicity and economy of this glazing technique is found in a pair of pendant portraits by Maes, the portraits of Petronella Dunois and Pieter Groenendijk (figs. 25 and 26). The drapery covering both figures was first fully modeled in orange colors. This modeling in the portrait of Dunois was left to represent an orange drapery, whereas

the orange-colored drapery in the portrait of Groenendijk became an underpaint, glazed over with a layer of undifferentiated red (fig. 27). This resulted in an entirely different final finish of the two costumes. There is no doubt that both paintings are finished. Cross-sections of paint from each costume reveal the similarity of the two underpaints and the respective absence and presence of the red glaze layer (figs. 28 and 29).

These examples illustrate how the brilliant red glaze was often used for costumes, while in the Columbia painting it is used only in the background. In the *Portrait of a Lady* in the Timken Museum of Art, San Diego, a billowing background cloth has been glazed brilliant red with the undifferentiated technique. The sitter’s red shawl in the same painting differs from the curtain in that Maes modeled the shawl more traditionally, first with different mixtures of red lake and then by only selective glazing. The high key



FIG. 25. *Portrait of Petronella Dunois*, Nicolaes Maes, ca. 1680, oil on canvas, 27 1/4 × 22 3/4 in. (69.2 × 57.8 cm). Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. The final orange mantle is similar to the underpaint of the red mantle her husband, Pieter Groenendijk, wears in the pendant painting.



FIG. 26. *Portrait of Pieter Groenendijk*, Nicolaes Maes, ca. 1680, oil on canvas, 27 1/4 × 22 3/4 in. (69.2 × 57.8 cm). Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. The red glaze of his mantle covers an undermodeling similar to the final paint in his wife’s portrait.

of the red in the background drapery is similar to that in the previous uniformly glazed costume examples, again contrasting with the subdued tone seen in the Columbia painting. As in all the examples, the final color differences depend on the color of the underpaint rather than on the glaze alone. These differences illustrate that Maes was well aware of his options. Though there may be slight fading or discoloration in the red in any of the paintings,⁵⁵ it should be assumed that the more subtle color in the Columbia painting, as in the background of the portrait of Belchje Hulft, was intentional. As previously mentioned, the large discrete particles of white lead included in the brown paint used in the mid-tones of the Columbia painting not only lighten the brown color but also allow the red glaze to be more visible than if it were applied over a finely pig-

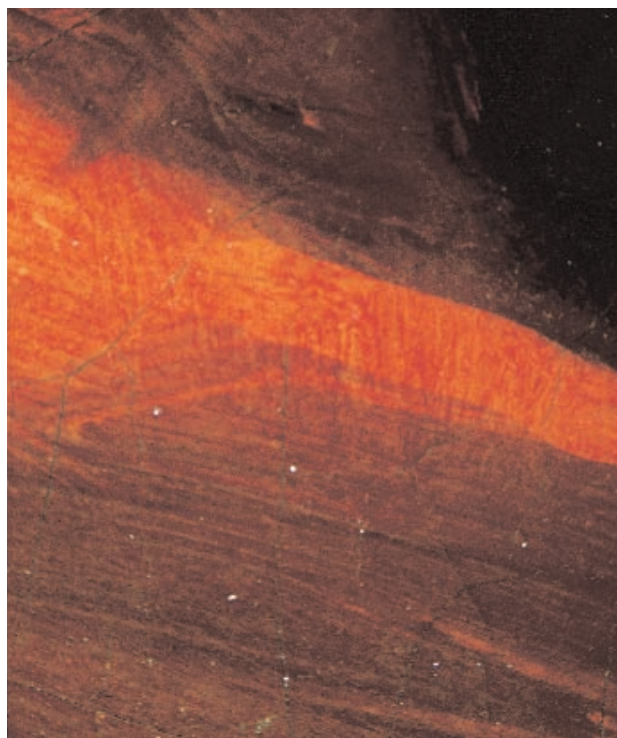


FIG. 27. *Portrait of Pieter Groenendijk* (fig. 26), detail of the free brushstrokes of the red glaze, applied without direct correspondence to the forms in the underpainted mantle.

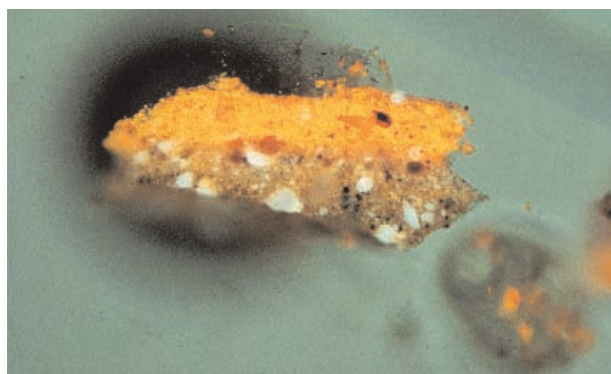


FIG. 28. *Portrait of Petronella Dunois* (fig. 25), cross-section (200×) from the orange mantle; note the absence of the red glaze.

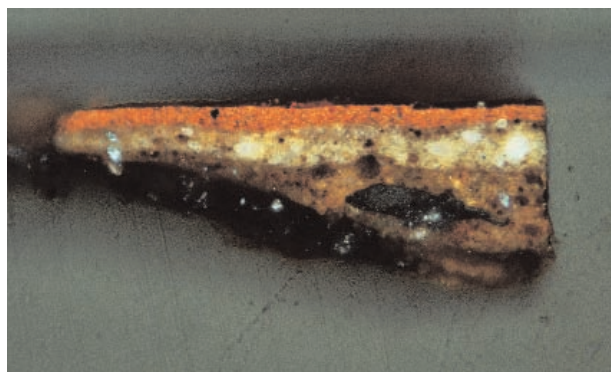


FIG. 29. *Portrait of Pieter Groenendijk* (fig. 26), cross-section (200×) from the mid-tone of the red mantle; the red glaze is applied over an underpaint of orange similar to the final layer of the mantle in the pendant portrait of Petronella Dunois.

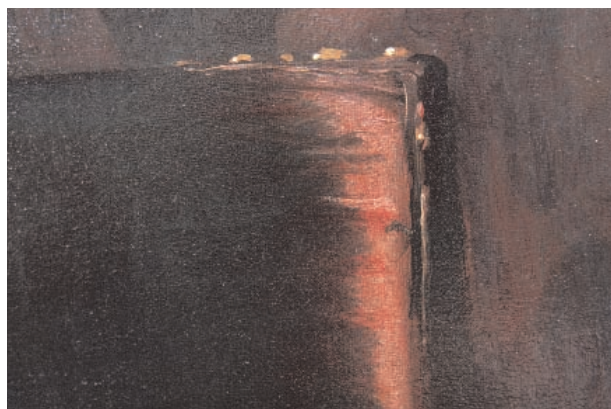


FIG. 30. *Portrait of a Lady* (fig. 1), detail of the red glaze over the chair and the curtain, with added strokes of red glaze emphasizing the highlights of the chair back.

mented uniform brown color. This was calculated to create the right balance between the reds of the mid-tones and those of the shadows and highlights. To achieve a darker effect in the shadow of the table covering, Maes used a brown underpaint without the large white pigment particles found elsewhere. As a final touch intended to further increase the contrasts, Maes accentuated the red highlights of the chair back by adding quick dashes of extra red color (fig. 30).

Nicolaes Maes was a very accomplished and adept portraitist. His technique was based on a skillful economy of paint application and on the use of a limited palette. The success of the Columbia painting is the result of the careful rendering of the portrait, which captures the powerful presence of the sitter without over-working, placed in a subdued yet colored background that perfectly frames the sitter. Arnold Houbraken recorded that:

He [Maes] had an adroit and flattering brush which served him very well in painting portraits, to which he devoted himself exclusively and [to him a very great share had fallen], I do not know if there was any painter before or after him who was so successful at capturing a likeness.⁵⁶

As much as Maes's prosperity was based on painting skill and his ability to please his clients, his economic success was also undoubtedly linked to the ease and speed of his execution. In his later works he rendered the costumes and backgrounds with such economy that upon close analysis the form of a drapery or a background design can appear illegible or lost. Nonetheless, in normal viewing, the rich appearance of the silks and satins seem to shimmer successfully as a lasting expression of the intended effect. The red glazing technique described here, found in many Maes paintings, has a special place in his oeuvre, enabling him to achieve this goal. If a painter's skill can be measured in his ability to achieve a desired effect with the most economy, Maes was an indisputable master.



FIG. 31. *Portrait of Nicolaes Maes*, Jacobus Houbraken, mixed engraving and etching, 5³/₄ × 4 in. (14.5 × 10 cm).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere thanks go to the many people, especially those colleagues at the Rijksmuseum, who gave input into the discussions regarding the glazing technique of Nicolaes Maes. For their encouragement, my gratitude also goes to the late Dr. Hubert von Sonnenburg, as well as to Andrea Rothe, Dorothy Mahon and Dianne Dwyer Modestini, all of whom recognized the value of publishing a description of this technique; to Eneida Parreira and Gwen Tauber for their patient readings of the text.

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NOTES

1. Arnold Houbraken, *De Grootte Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen*, 3 vols., 1718–21; Vol. II, 1719, pp. 273–7.
2. Houbraken 1719 (cited in note 1), Vol. II, pp. 273–4.
3. W. W. Robinson, *The Early Works of Nicolaes Maes, 1653 to 1661*. Thesis presented to the Department of Fine Arts, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 1996, UMI Dissertation Services, pp. 4–5.
4. *Ibid.*, for a discussion of this topic, pp. 203–4.
5. Houbraken 1719 (cited in note 1), Vol. II, pp. 273–4. Translation from Robinson 1996 (cited in note 3), p. 47.
6. Houbraken 1719 (cited in note 1), Vol. II, pp. 275–6.
7. Mijtens and Hanneman were undoubtedly closely associated after circa 1640. Adrian Hanneman, the older of the two, spent approximately twelve years in London (1626–38). Van Dyck settled in London in 1632, and Hanneman may have worked as an assistant in his studio. Hanneman returned to The Hague in 1638 and joined the painters' guild there in 1640. Jan Mijtens lived all his life in The Hague and joined the same guild one year earlier. Jan Mijtens may have trained with his uncle Daniel Mijtens after Daniel's return from London to The Hague around 1634. As early as 1618, Daniel was in London where he was a court painter, first to James I and later to Charles I, only to be overshadowed by van Dyck's popularity in London after 1632, when Daniel returned to Holland. In 1656 when the Hague painters and sculptors disassociated themselves from the guild and set up a new artists' organization, *Pictura*, both Hanneman and Jan Mijtens were active as founders. Hanneman became *Pictura's* first dean, serving from 1656 to 1659 and again from 1663 to 1666. Mijtens was a governor from 1667 to 1668 and then dean from 1669 until 1670, the year of his death.
8. Differing opinions as to the influences on Maes are put forward in the writings of Thoré and Hofstede de Groot. Wilhelm Bürger writing in 1860 under the name Et.-Théo.-Jos. Thoré in *Musées de la Hollande II . . .* (p. 26) recalling Houbraken's account of Maes's Antwerp visit, concluded that it had been a major catalyst for his change in style. This view was countered by Cornelis Hofstede de Groot in *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century*, 6 (London, MacMillan & Co. Ltd., 1916, p. 474). Hofstede de Groot wrote that the sources of Maes's mature style, "are to be found in the pictures of Hanneman, Flinck, Van der Helst, Eekhout and Lievens. The later portraits of Nicolaes Maes brought no new Flemish element into the evolution of Dutch painting; the artist developed in the spirit of the times and of the national Dutch school." Both from Robinson 1996 (cited in note 3). See Robinson 1996 for discussion on the subject (pp. 41–95).
9. L. Krempel, *Studien zu den Daterierten Gemälden der Nicolaes Maes (1634–1693)*, Phil. Diss., Bonn, Rheinisch Friedrich-Wilhelm Universität (Peter Mountain, Michael Imhof Verlag, 2000); and Werner Sumowski, *Gemälde der Rembrandt-Schüler*, 6 vols. (Landau/Pfalz, Edition PVA, Pfälzische Verlagsanstalt Gmbh 1983), both for a good pictorial overview. Also Robinson 1996 (cited in note 3), for further discussion.
10. M. K. Talley, *Portrait Painting in England: Studies in the Technical Literature Before 1700* (London, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1981), provides an overview of seventeenth-century English portrait painting practice. "Fill-in technique" is meant to denote studio procedures whereby paintings were finished in the absence of the sitter using such practices as: Anthony van Dyck's use of standard drawings to complete the hands of sitters (Jo Kirby, "The painter's trade in the seventeenth century: theory and practice," *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, Vol. 20 (1999), p. 29); Sir Peter Lely's use of numerous stock poses, numbered so that a client could easily choose the most suitable one. Lely was not alone in using assistants to paint draperies and backgrounds, doing only the portrait himself. An inventory of Lely's studio made after his death included forty-five different pieces of drapery and numerous unfinished poses including fourteen half-lengths and forty-two without heads (Talley 1981, pp. 335 and 367–70). At the time of Sir Godfrey Kneller's death approximately 500 unfinished paintings were left in his studio with instructions in his will for an assistant to finish them (Talley 1981, p. 356). Though it can be argued that Maes probably did not have a large production studio with many assistants, his repetitive style does imply the use of similar procedures and devices.
11. Gerard de Lairese, *The Art of Painting, in All its Branches* from translation by J.F. Fritsch, London, 1738, pp. 345 and 347; taken from Talley 1981 (cited in note 10), pp. 369–70.
12. Sir William Sanderson, *Graphice, or, The use of the "Pen" and "Pensill" Or, The Most Excellent Art of Painting*. London: Robert Crofts, 1658, p. 39; taken from Talley 1981 (cited in note 10), p. 234.

13. Houbraken 1719 (cited in note 1), Vol. II, pp. 273–4; translation from Robinson 1996 (cited in note 3), p. 13.
14. A provenance search was carried out by Maria L. Gilbert, Director, Provenance Index, the Getty Art History Information Program, for the Columbia Museum of Art. From the file: “The provenance of the picture has been traced back to 1835/1844 as having come from the collection of Joseph Strutt, Esquire of Derby, then through family inheritance to public auction . . . , and through various private owners to Samuel H. Kress in 1938.”
15. Phyllis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas, *Costume for Births, Marriages & Deaths*. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1972, pp. 261–9.
16. This comes from an English standard size of 50 × 40 in. called a half-length or three-quarters. Talley 1981 (cited in note 10), p. 250.
17. This data compiled from Krempel 2000 (cited in note 9); Krempel estimates the total oeuvre of Maes would include approximately 900 portraits.
18. E. van de Wetering, *Rembrandt: The Painter at Work*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1997, p. 123.
19. Width measurements could be 2/4, 3/4, 6/4, etc. referring to 1/2 ell, 1 ell, 1.5 ell, etc. In the seventeenth century every city had its own units of measure. Both Amsterdam and Dordrecht used ell measures equal to 68.8 cm and 68.5 cm respectively. Amsterdam also used the Brabrants ell of 69.4 cm and the Brugge ell of 70 cm for cloth measures. In addition, cloth woven in Ghent, which was regularly imported into Holland, could be measured in the Ghent ell of 76.5 cm. Therefore, cloth considered to be 1.5 ell, could measure between 103 and 114 cm wide depending on its origin. These are not exact measures, only minimum measures. By using the entire width (or close to it) of a 1.5 ell cloth for one of the dimensions, a variety of painting sizes was produced creating the clusters. Similar other clusters of Maes paintings correspond to cloth of either 1/2 ell (+/- 35 cm) or 1 ell (+/- 70 cm) used either in its full width or in half-widths. Though a range of sizes is seen within the clusters, they appear to represent Maes’s standard or preferred sizes. Van de Wetering (1997 (cited in note 18), p. 125), also noted a similar size cluster related to 1.5 ell when he grouped Rembrandt’s paintings. All the above ell size conversions are from J.M. Verhoeff, *De oude Nederlandse maten en gewichten* (Amsterdam: P. J. Meertens-Instituut, 1983). All four tacking edges of the Columbia painting have been cut away. However, there is little reason to believe that the size of the painting has been greatly altered. Cusping that occurs as a deformation of the lines of the canvas weave as it was originally pulled and tied or tacked to a stretching frame can give clues to the original size of a painting. The pattern of the cusping is locked into the weave by the dried ground and/or paint and is best read in an overall X-radiograph of the painting. An overall X-radiograph of the Columbia portrait was not available; nonetheless, the cusping from the stretching is visible to the naked eye on both sides, at the bottom edge, and slightly at the top edge. The absence of strong cusping at the top edge is in itself not reason enough to postulate that the painting is trimmed, as this sort of minimal cusping has been observed in other Maes paintings where the tacking edges are intact. The present canvas may have been cut at that edge from a larger piece of pre-primed canvas, or the original stretching to this size may have begun evenly with the top edge; either process could result in little cusping. The dimensions indicate that the warp direction of the fabric is probably vertical. See van de Wetering 1997 and van de Wetering, “The canvas support” in J. Bruyn, et. al., *Corpus of Rembrandt* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1986), Vol. II, pp. 15–43, for further discussion on seventeenth-century canvas sizes and stretching procedures.
20. In the latter half of the seventeenth century in Holland, the double ground is often associated with commercially prepared canvases. These were supplied by a specialist in priming, a *premuerder*. The commercially prepared canvas would sometimes be grounded or toned again by the artist with the color he wanted as an underlayer. That this large canvas has only a single ground layer indicates the possibility that it may have been prepared only in the studio of the artist.
21. Similar IRR images have been seen in many Maes paintings. An underpaint or underdrawing layer in IRR reflectography usually indicates the presence of carbon in an underpaint layer. This poses a question as an underpaint layer has yet to be clearly identified in the analysis of a cross-section of a paint sample from the portrait in a Maes painting.
22. Van Dyck is said to have had occasional sittings lasting the whole day; whether this is true is not known (Kirby 1999 (cited in note 10), p. 15). Kneller, whose productivity was very high, could have up to fourteen different clients sit in one day for short periods; then he required between ten and twelve sittings to complete each portrait (Talley 1981 (cited in note 10), p. 350). Lely would have three to four sittings of one to three hours (Talley 1981, p. 330). The daybooks of the artist Mary Beales indicate a similar number of sittings each of the same length as Lely’s. This was probably the norm for many artists (Talley 1981, pp. 293–6).
23. Talley 1981 and also Kirby 1999 (both cited in note 10).
24. The English school of the seventeenth century was dominated by continental artists, the most famous among them being Anthony van Dyck from Antwerp. Like van Dyck, Sir Peter Lely and Sir Godfrey Kneller both learned painting in Holland. They would have needed only to adapt stylistically to English tastes. See Talley 1981 and Kirby 1999 (both cited in note 10).
25. William Gandy, *Notes on Painting, 1673–1699. Transcribed in the Memorandum Book of Ostias Humphrey, 1777–1795*, B.M. MS. Additional 22, 950, f. 24v; taken from Kirby 1999 (cited in note 10), p. 335.
26. David King, *Secrets in the Noble Arte of Miniature or Limning, ca 1653–1657*, MS. Add 12, 461, f. 47r.; taken from Talley 1981 (cited in note 10), p. 210.
27. From Anonymous, *The Excellency of the Pen and Pencil*, London, 1668, p. 102; taken from Talley 1981 (cited in note 10), p. 258.
28. Marshall Smith, *The Art Of Painting According to the Theory and Practice of the Best “Italian, French and Germane” Masters*, London, 1692.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 80–81.
31. Talley 1981 (cited in note 10), for examples and a summary, p. 399.

32. Willem Beurs, *De Groote Waereld in 't kleen geschildert, of Schilderagtig Tafereel van s' Weerlds Schilderyen, kortelyk vervat in Ses Boeken. Verlarende de Hoof verwen, haar verscheide mengelingen in Oly, en der zelve gebruik*, Amsterdam, 1692. Sevende Hoofdeel, p. 184, *Van 't Kolorijt van een Leevendig Mensche*; Agtste Hoofdeel, p. 187, *Van 't Kolorijt van een Dood Mensche*. The previous chapters deal with aspects of still-life painting and the painting of insects and animals of all kinds, landscapes and meats—raw, cooked, unsalted and salted.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 186. This is actually a very minimal palette. Talley (1981 (cited in note 10), p. 389), mentions a palette of fifteen colors that then gives twenty-seven tints and another of forty colors.
34. Krempel extrapolates from Houbraken the following possible Maes students: Jan de Haen, Jacob Moelart, Johannes Vollevens, Justus de Gelder and Margaretha van Godewijck (who may have also painted two or three garden backgrounds for Maes) (Krempel 2000 (cited in note 9), pp. 39–41).
35. Krempel estimates that during his most productive period (1675–78) Maes would have completed on average thirty-two paintings a year, and in 1675, his most productive year, a minimum of fifty-five (Krempel 2000 (cited in note 9), pp. 40–41).
36. Alan Chong and M.E. Wiesman, “De figuurschilderkunst in Dordrecht, 1620–1719” in the exhibition catalogue, *De Zichtbaere Werelt* (Dordrechts Museum, 1992, p. 28), argue that the stylization of Maes’s paintings after 1680 indicates the regular use of assistants. This argument is countered by Krempel, who though he assumes that Maes would have had assistants to prepare his palettes and do other non-painting tasks, he did not have a large production studio or school (Krempel 2000 (cited in note 9), p. 40).
37. The Kress painting *Portrait of a Lady* was cleaned and restored by Dianne Dwyer Modestini in 1997–98 at the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. A condition report written at that time notes: “The black silk of the dress is painted in an almost abstract manner, using only middle tone and shadow, so that the folds of the drapery are flat and two dimensional.” From the Columbia Museum of Art files, undated.
38. In many paintings, Maes applied other color glazes, often less visible in uv light, either locally or in a similar overall, undifferentiated method. Some of these, altered by aging, may have also contributed to the present darkened appearance of the skies and backgrounds of many of his later paintings. Less pigmented than the red glaze, these other colored glazes are easily confused with old varnish layers and have sometimes been abraded or even lost in past restorations. For a recent discussion on the color changes of smalt (and the fading of red lakes) see Marika Spring, N. Penny, R. White, and M. Wyld, “Color change in *The Conversion of the Magdalena* attributed to Pedro Campaña,” *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, Vol. 22 (2001), pp. 54–63.
39. Laurent Sozzani, “An unanticipated use of a transparent red glaze in the later paintings of Nicolaas Maes” in summaries of posters at the IIC Dublin Congress, 1998, *Painting Techniques, History, Materials and Studio Practice*.
40. A good example can be seen in many paintings of Jacopo Tintoretto where transparent glazes give color to forms freely undermodeled in white.
41. Other paintings, when fully examined, may also reveal similar glaze applications. Future examination of paintings by artists such as Daniel Mytens, Sir Peter Lely, and Herman Verhelst, to name only a few, whose pictures have red glaze passages reminiscent of the overall glazing of Maes, may provide more examples. Recognizing a glaze as an overall undifferentiated layer can be difficult if a painting has not been completely cleared of old oxidized varnish layers. An oxidized varnish can mask the appearance when viewed in uv light. An example of an overall undifferentiated glaze of verdigris over completed undermodeling has been reported on a painting by Jan Baptist Weenix (1621–1660), *A Dog and Cat Near a Disemboweled Deer* (Rijksmuseum SK-A 591); Arie Wallert (ed.), *Still Lifes: Techniques and Style, An Examination of Paintings from the Rijksmuseum* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, 1999), p. 91 (published to accompany an exhibition). For more on verdigris glazes see Margriet van Eikema Hommes, “Verdigris glazes in historical oil paintings: recipes and techniques,” *ZKK-Zeitschrift für Kunsttechnologie und Konservierung*, 15.2001, Vol. 1, pp. 163–95.
42. Red lake pigments made from dyestuffs precipitated on aluminum hydroxide (or less commonly onto calcium carbonate) have been identified in easel paintings from the early fifteenth century to modern times. Numerous common names have been used in texts for these reds. These derive from either the morphology of the source: *grana* (grains), *cimatura de grana* (shearings of grain-dyed textiles), *coccus* (berries), *vermiculum* (worms); the color: carmine, sanguine (blood), topias (topaz); or the place of manufacture: Florentine lake, Venetian lake, Paris red (generally cities with large trade monopolies). Recipes from 1400 to 1900 for lake dyes cite brazilwood, the madder plant and the scale insects—lac, kermes and cochineal—as the primary source material. All, with the exception of brazilwood, which is only rarely found in paintings, have been identified in numerous easel paintings analyzed by researchers. In the Netherlands up to the early seventeenth century kermes, madder, and occasionally Old World (Polish) cochineal were the primary sources for the red lakes. After 1600 New World cochineal becomes the predominant source material for red lake used in the Netherlands. Cochineal is the source of the colorant found in the glazes of Maes. See also J. Kirby, “A spectrophotometric method for the identification of the lake pigment dyestuffs” (*National Gallery Technical Bulletin* (Sept. 1977), pp. 35–45) for a detailed description of various red lake colorants.
43. Analysis was carried out by Christopher McGlinchey, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY. Samples of red were first examined by microscopic methods where it was determined that the red pigment was an amorphous, low refractive index pigment with no visually observable auto-fluorescence. For paintings of this date, these characteristics suggest the use of carmine. The samples were subsequently extracted according to the procedure described in a chapter on carmine by Helmut Schweppe and Heinz Roosen-Runge (*Artists' Pigments*, Robert L. Feller (ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, Vol. 1, p. 276). The red extract was characterized by FTIR microscopy and indicates absorption spectra similar to free carminic acid. This indicates a colorant derived from the dried bodies of cochineal insects, assumed to be New World *Dactylopius*

- coccus* Costa. This confirmed a previous analysis by Arie Wallert of the Rijksmuseum that also identified cochineal lake in a transparent red sample from a Maes painting. He used direct temperature resolved mass spectrometry (DTMS), photo luminescence spectrometry (PLS), thin-layer chromatography (TLC), and microchemical tests; Sozzani 1998 (cited in note 39). For further discussion on analytical methods see J. Kirby and R. White, "The identification of red lake pigments and a discussion of their use," *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, 17 (1996), pp. 56–80.
44. We would like to thank Margriet van Eikema Hommes, Ph.D., Kunsthistorisch Instituut der Universiteit van Amsterdam, for supplying many of the following source references. These were gleaned from her research for her doctoral thesis: *Discoloration in Renaissance and Baroque Oil Paintings, Studies into Painting Recipes, Theoretical Concepts and Scientific Data* (published by Archetype Publications, London, in 2004 as *Changing Pictures: Discoloration in 15th to 17th Century Oil Paintings*).
 45. Francisco Pacheco, *Arte de la Pintura*, 1649, from *Artists' Techniques in Golden Age Spain: Six Treatises in Translation*, edited and translated by Zahira Veliz. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 73.
 46. G.P. Lomazzo, *A Tracte Containing the Artes of Curious Paintinge, Carvinge & Buildinge*, English translation by Richard Haydocke. Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1598 (Third book, Chapter IX), p. 107.
 47. For more on the use of verdigris glazes see van Eikema Hommes 2001 (cited in note 41).
 48. Filipe Nunes, *Arte poetica, e da pintura e symetria, com principios da perspectiva*, 1615, from Veliz 1986 (cited in note 45), p. 5.
 49. T. de Mayerne, *Pictoria Sculptoria et quae subalternarum artium*, 1620 (pp. 221–2), from *Quellen Für Maltechnik . . . De Mayyerne Manuskript*, Ernst Berger, Vaduz, Sändig Reprint Verlag, 1984, p. 282.
 50. Harley, ms 6376 British Library.
 51. Hessel Miedema, "Den grondt der edel vry schilder-const/Karel van Mander," edited, translated and annotated by Hessel Miedema. Utrecht: Haentjens Dekker & Gumbert, 1973, fol. 44.
 52. Smith 1692 (cited in note 28), p. 84.
 53. José Garcia Hidalgo, *Principios Para Estudiar el Nobilissimo y Real Arte de la Pintura*, 1693, from Veliz 1986 (cited in note 45), p. 135.
 54. Smith 1692 (cited in note 28), p. 84.
 55. See D. Saunders and J. Kirby, "Light-induced color changes in red and yellow lake pigments," *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, 15 (1994), pp. 79–97. From the data presented here it can be assumed that the lake reds in all Nicolaes Maes paintings have faded slightly. Regarding the Columbia painting, a restoration report written in 1996 by Mario and Dianne Dwyer Modestini state that background elements are "... glazed broadly with a red lake. The final glazes have either faded or have been partly removed in past cleanings." From the Columbia Museum of Art files, dated April 14, 1996.
 56. Houbraken 1719 (cited in note 1), Vol. II, p. 274. Translation from Robinson 1996 (cited in note 3), p. 51.

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

- Figs. 1, 2, 5, 6, 12, 15, 16, 24A, 24B, and 30, pp. 164, 169, 172, 173, 174, 180, and 182. Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, SC, Samuel H. Kress Collection (CMA 1962.17).
- Figs. 3, 17, 19, 20A, 20B, 21A, and 21B, pp. 167, 178, and 179. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (SK-A 4881).
- Fig. 4, p. 168. Courtesy of the Timken Museum of Art, San Diego, CA.
- Figs. 7, 9, 11, 18, 22A, 22B, 23A, and 23B, pp. 170, 171, 172, 178, and 180. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (SK-A 1269).
- Fig. 8, p. 170. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (SK-A 1269). IRR montage assemblage courtesy of Monique Berends.
- Fig. 10, p. 171. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (SK-A 2666).
- Figs. 13 and 14, p. 173. Courtesy of the collection of Pauw van Wieldrecht, The Netherlands. Photograph ©Peter Mokook.
- Figs. 25 and 28, pp. 181 and 182. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (SK-A 4889).
- Figs. 26, 27, and 29, pp. 181 and 182. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (SK-A 4888).
- Fig. 31, p. 183. Houbraken 1719 (cited in note 1), vol. II, p. 277.



View of the Molo
Canaletto (Giovanni Antonio Canal), ca. 1725
Oil on canvas
26 1/2 × 32 3/4 in. (67.3 × 83.2 cm)
Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, South Carolina
CMA 1954.44 (K-252)



FIG. 1. *View of the Molo*, before treatment.



FIG. 2. *View of the Molo* (fig. 1), after treatment.

View of the Molo: A Canaletto Attribution Reinstated

Elise Effmann

SHADOWED BY THE DOUBT of its attribution for decades, the *View of the Molo* was sent to New York in 1997 from the Columbia Museum of Art in South Carolina for conservation. This occasion was a valuable opportunity for close technical and stylistic examination. Shortly after Samuel H. Kress bought it in 1933, the painting was accepted unanimously as a genuine Canaletto by scholars evaluating the collection (figs. 1 and 2).¹ However, by the time the Kress Collection catalogue was published four decades later, enough suspicion had been raised to reduce the Venetian scene to “attributed to Canaletto” in the entry.² This downward revision of the work was largely a result of skepticism expressed by the foremost Canaletto authority of the day, W.G. Constable. Constable had such serious doubts about “the character of the brush work and the drawing” that he believed not only that the scene “is not by Canaletto,” but is “probably a work of the earlier 19th Century.”³ It was this view that was published in his two-volume catalogue raisonné in 1962; the revised edition remains the definitive study of the artist’s oeuvre to date.⁴

As research into the numerous paintings by and attributed to Canaletto and his studio continues, art historians have come to depend more frequently on technical study. Since 1980, published studies focusing both on individual paintings and on the broader development of the artist’s technique have been important in establishing a clearer chronology and also in resolving issues of attribution.⁵ These studies, as well as the opportunity to view a large number

of his early paintings assembled for a recent exhibition in Venice, helped to strengthen the case for the Kress *View of the Molo* being an early work entirely by the hand of Canaletto.⁶

Although he never wavered from painting *veduti* and *capricci*, Canaletto's style changed markedly over the five decades of his activity. The sleek scenes in his later works, filled with bright airy skies and formulaic brushstrokes, differ vastly in feeling from the immediacy and intimacy of his paintings from the 1720s. These early views are characterized by exuberant and highly textured brushwork, dramatic contrasts of deep shadow and radiant sunlight, and a low overall tone absent in his paintings from the following decades. However, as Canaletto strove to establish his mature style, his work was also marked by an unrestrained experimentation in composition, level of finish, and technique. The works are so different from his later work that some paintings have only recently been recognized as by his hand. With the exception of archival evidence, the examination of characteristic technical features, such as the extent and color of underpainting and the application of architectural elements, is perhaps the most tangible method for placing a painting within Canaletto's vast and varied oeuvre.

In addition to stylistic parallels, the Columbia



FIG. 3. *Grand Canal: Looking North from near the Rialto Bridge*, Canaletto, 1725, oil on canvas, 35 1/4 × 51 3/4 in. (89.5 × 131.4 cm). Courtesy of the Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli al Lingotto, Turin.

Museum of Art painting shares numerous other similarities in its structure and paint handling with several works by Canaletto datable from 1724 to 1726, most notably the series of four Venetian views commissioned by the Lucchese textile merchant, Stefano Conti (fig. 3). Through payment receipts, these paintings can be securely dated to 1725–26 and are critical to establishing the painter's early chronology.⁷ These four scenes are high points of Canaletto's early painting style, showing the great care he took in rendering texture and light through a masterful control of his medium. Many idiosyncratic aspects of technique, such as the body of the paint, the sequence of its application, the treatment of pictorial details such as figures, stormy skies, and still water, as well as the distinctive appearance of the architectural details, all share striking similarities with the painting in Columbia, South Carolina.

Like the majority of Canaletto's paintings from the 1720s, *View of the Molo* is painted on a plain-weave canvas that has been primed with a red ground.⁸ On this preparation layer, the general form of the architecture was blocked in with broad brushstrokes of thick paint, quickly establishing the basic planes of the composition with short horizontal marks for the quay and sweeping diagonal ones in the Palazzo Ducale.⁹ The texture of these first rapidly applied strokes is clearly visible through the successive thinner paint layers and enlivens the finished surface (fig. 4). The principal composition thus established, the sky and water were underpainted in gray. The selective use of a gray underpaint is typical of Canaletto's technique in the mid-1720s; later in the decade he simplified it to a uniform gray layer applied overall.¹⁰ It is interesting to note in the Kress painting that the initial roofline of the Palazzo Ducale was lowered with the application of this gray layer to the sky. The artist then scored a perspectival line into the wet gray paint to mark the upper limit of the ornamental crenellations crowning the façade.¹¹

The energetic brushwork that is so clear on the surface of the painting is even more noticeable in the X-radiograph (fig. 5). The sheer exuberance



FIG. 4. *View of the Molo* (fig. 1), detail.

and texture of the paint application, often worked wet-into-wet, is visible in the two gondolas in the left foreground. This produces an X-radiograph strikingly different from the more restrained and controlled depiction of a similar scene from the Kress Collection at the El Paso Museum of Art that dates to the early 1730s.¹² In fact, the “unusual appearance . . . under X-ray” of the South Carolina painting was cited in the 1973 collection catalogue as supporting Constable’s opinion that the painting was not by the Venetian artist.¹³ However, it is precisely this mastery of paint used to achieve a variety of textural effects visible throughout the composition that is so characteristic of his work during the mid-1720s. The great control he wielded over the consistency of paint allowed Canaletto to give physical

dimension to the folds in fabrics, animate the stone surface of the quay with flickers of light created by pastose dabs of paint, and create a stillness in the water through long horizontal strokes of his brush.

Although Canaletto used materials that were all commonplace in eighteenth-century Venetian painting, it is of particular interest that he was one of the first artists to introduce the newly discovered Prussian blue into his palette. The earliest modern synthetic pigment, it was first made in Germany around 1704 and soon became a valued alternative to other more costly blues. Canaletto, who relied heavily on blue because of his subject matter, used this new color almost exclusively throughout his career.¹⁴ When viewed under high magnification, the large blue flakes visible in a sample taken from the water of *View of the Molo* display optical characteristics identical to samples taken from other several other eighteenth-century Venetian paintings that have been identified as the early form of Prussian blue.¹⁵ Unlike the color achieved by later manufacture, which resulted in a very finely divided product, the typical eighteenth-century process was far less consistent and often resulted in pigment particles substantially larger than those of modern Prussian blue.¹⁶ The presence of this early form is further evidence of an eighteenth-century origin for the painting—not

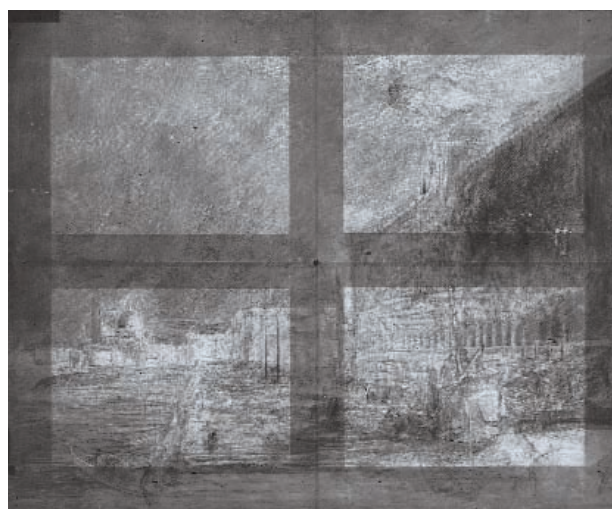


FIG. 5. *View of the Molo* (fig. 1), X-radiograph.

the nineteenth century, as Constable conjectured.

At some point after work had progressed well beyond the initial lay-in stage, the painting was apparently abandoned for a period of time. When it was taken up again, the artist made several significant modifications to the composition that show the reworking of an already dry paint layer. Detectable on the surface of the painting, and clearly visible in the X-radiograph, a large boat with a mast that reached nearly to the center balcony of the Palazzo Ducale once dominated the lower right corner of the canvas (fig. 6). In the reconsideration, the composition was extended outwards at the right by almost an inch. The mast and spar of the boat were scraped down, resulting in jagged losses of a type that could only occur after the paint had had enough time to dry fully. These losses and the expanded right edge of the scene were repainted with the same quickly applied and textured paint dabs. The remainder of the boat was painted out and the bridge was shifted to the right, with the addition of the small and somewhat awkward figure standing in the gondola. It also appears that the left edge of the Palazzo Ducale was extended and the center balcony and crowning statue of Justice were shifted to the left, although it is not clear whether this was concurrent with other changes or earlier.



FIG. 6. *View of the Molo* (fig. 1), detail of X-radiograph showing pentimenti in the lower right corner.

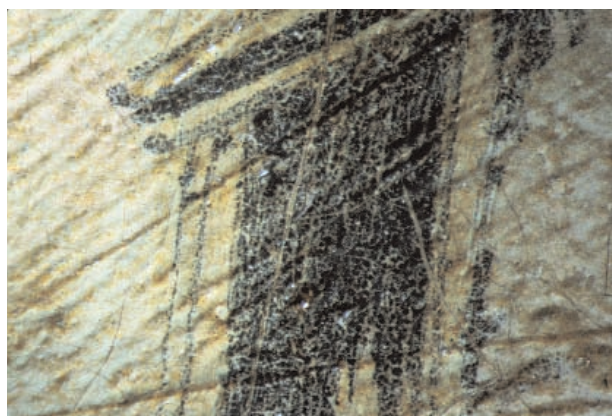


FIG. 7. *View of the Molo* (fig. 1), detail of the black material used in architectural details.

Major adjustments like these to Canaletto's early work are not uncommon and attest to his compositional creativity and willingness to manipulate the topography and architecture as he painted.¹⁷

Canaletto added the glazed shadows, figures, and architectural details in the final stages of painting. The handling of figures and architecture is germane when considering dating and attribution. The behavior of the material used to render features in the architecture, such as the lines framing the windows and the shadowed areas under the arches of the Palazzo Ducale, is of particular interest. The medium used for the Kress painting appears to be identical to one identified by Viola Pemberton-Pigott in her examination of two of the dated paintings Canaletto did for Conti. She noted that in a technique peculiar to Canaletto: "the architectural detailing has been painted in a black substance that has reticulated on drying into broken lines of microscopic black beading which has the instant effect of softening and blending the lines into their surroundings."¹⁸ She suggests that the material might be ink, and it certainly has this appearance in the Kress painting. Areas painted with this medium appear to have resisted its application to a certain degree, creating an effect that is significantly different from the other oil glazes (fig. 7). Canaletto used this black material in other (but not all) paintings datable to the middle years of the 1720s, later abandoning it altogether in favor of lines painted in a fluid gray



FIG. 8. *View of the Molo* (fig. 1), detail of gondolier.

or black paint.¹⁹ The depiction of the figures is typical of other early works by Canaletto. In a technique very characteristic of his paintings from the 1720s, he first underpainted the figures in *View of the Molo* with pure black before colorfully clothing them with fabric practically sculpted out of soft pastose paint. Canaletto used this method for painting figures until about 1727, when he began to simplify his technique and omit the step of underpainting altogether.²⁰ Although not conclusive evidence on its own, the close similarity to other early works in both appearance and paint handling of the gondolier and the robed magistrates in red and gray in the foreground, as well as the colorful little dots for figures in the distance, provides additional support for the attribution of the Kress painting to Canaletto (figs. 8 and 9).²¹

When the technique and process of *View of the Molo* are considered as a whole, it is unlikely that anyone but Canaletto could have painted this scene. The presence of the early form of Prussian blue in the water dates the painting to the early to mid-eighteenth century, undermining W.G. Constable's ascription of the work to a nineteenth-century imitator. However, the clearest evidence for the authorship of the painting lies in specific idiosyncratic aspects of the technique—construction and details that imitators would not notice and could not know. Every aspect of the technique of *View of the Molo*—the red-grounded canvas, the selective gray underpainting, a textured

and exuberantly painted primary paint layer, and the particular handling of final details and glazes—is completely consistent with that of other paintings by Canaletto dating between 1724 and 1726. This was a period in his career in which he was actively experimenting with style, creating expressively and carefully painted compositions, and developing techniques that he would later simplify to meet the high demand for his work.

Although there has been speculation about the participation of assistants in Canaletto's studio, particularly from the mid-1730s onwards, it seems highly unlikely that his paintings from the 1720s, when he was developing his own style and establishing his reputation among collectors, would involve any other hand than his own. The pentimento in the lower right corner attests to the



FIG. 9. *View of the Molo* (fig. 1), detail of Santa Maria della Salute.

creativity of the mind at work, a mind actively reconsidering the composition as a whole by choosing to eliminate the boat crowding the right foreground. This type of major compositional change indicates the hand of a master, not a follower. It is also unlikely that a follower or copyist would emulate the more idiosyncratic elements of Canaletto's early technique, such as the ink-like material used for the architectural details found in both the Kress and the Conti paintings.²² From the Palazzo Ducale's pink marble and white stone façade stained by algae growth to the minute rigging of the boats in the distance, all aspects of *View of the Molo* are infused with a care, calculation, and painterly skill that comfortably places the Kress painting with other accepted early works by Canaletto.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Katharine Baetjer, Curator of European Paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Mark Tucker, Senior Paintings Conservator at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, for their helpful suggestions and support, and Viola Pemberton-Pigott, former Senior Paintings Conservator of the Royal Collection, for sharing her years of research and opinions about the artist.

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NOTES

- The positive opinions were given by Giuseppe Fiocco, Roberto Longhi (1933), Raimond van Marle, F. Mason Perkins, and William Suida (1935). Photocopies of documents, Samuel H. Kress Foundation Archives.
- Fern Rusk Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection, Vol. 3: Italian Schools, XVI–XVIII Century*. London: Phaidon, 1973, pp. 163–4.
- W.G. Constable to W. Suida, March 17, 1954, Samuel H. Kress Foundation Archives.
- W.G. Constable, *Canaletto: Giovanni Antonio Canal, 1697–1768*, 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962. The second edition was revised by J.G. Links in 1976 (Oxford: Clarendon Press), and the volumes were reissued with supplemental and additional plates in 1989 (Oxford: Clarendon Press).
- See: Pamela England, "An account of Canaletto's painting technique" in Charlotte Millar and Oliver Millar (eds.), *Canaletto* (exhib. cat.). London: The Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, 1980, pp. 127–8; David Bomford and Ashok Roy, "Canaletto's Venice: The Feastday of S. Roch," *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, 6 (1982) pp. 40–44; Keith Laing, "Canaletto: *Campo SS. Giovanni e Paolo*," *Bulletin of the Hamilton Kerr Institute* No. 1 (1988) pp. 96–8; Viola Pemberton-Pigott, "The development of Canaletto's painting technique" in Katharine Baetjer and J.G. Links (eds.), *Canaletto* (exhib. cat.). New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989, pp. 53–63; David Bomford and Ashok Roy, "Canaletto's *Stonemason's Yard* and *San Simeone Piccolo*," *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, No. 14 (1993), pp. 35–41; David Bomford and Gabriele Finaldi, "Technique and style in Canaletto's paintings" in *Venice through Canaletto's Eyes* (exhib. cat.). London: National Gallery of London and York, City Art Gallery, 1998, pp. 54–63; Viola Pemberton-Pigott, "Canaletto 'prima maniera': tradizione e innovazione nelle tecniche pittoriche degli esordi di Canaletto" in A. Bettagno and B.A. Kowalczyk (eds.), *Canaletto: Prima Maniera* (exhib. cat., Milan, 2001), pp. 185–9.
- Canaletto, Prima Maniera*, exhibition, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, Italy, March 18–June 10, 2001.
- The four paintings, now in the Pinacoteca Giovanni e Maria Agnelli in Turin, are: *Grand Canal: The Rialto Bridge from the North* (completed by November 25, 1725), Constable/Links 1989 (hereafter referred to as c/L 234); *Grand Canal: Looking North from near the Rialto Bridge* (by November 25, 1725), c/L 230; *Santi Giovanni e Paolo and the Scuola di San Marco* (by May 1726), c/L 304; *Grand Canal: From Santa Maria della Carità to the Bacino di San Marco* (by June 15, 1726), c/L 194.
- It is quite likely that Canaletto used canvas already primed by the supplier. References to pre-primed canvas (*telle imprimate*) purchased for the artist appear in letters from Anton Maria Zanetti il Vecchio to Arthur Pond dated December 24, 1728 and March 5, 1729. See Bettagno and Kowalczyk 2001 (cited in note 5), pp. 210–11.
- This is a technique noted in all the Conti paintings at the exhibition in Venice in 2001. The diagonal strokes in the building to the left in c/L 234 are visible in a detail reproduced in *Canaletto*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989 (cited in note 5), p. 92.
- Pemberton-Pigott 2001 (cited in note 5), p. 186; Bomford and Finaldi 1998 (cited in note 5), p. 55; Pemberton-Pigott 1989 (cited in note 5), p. 63. Pemberton-Pigott (*ibid.*) notes that Canaletto used gray under the sky and water and red under the buildings until about 1727–28. By 1729–30, he began to lighten the tone of his paintings and simplify his process covering the entire canvas with a uniform beige or pale gray layer.
- Pemberton-Pigott 1989 (cited in note 5) notes that Canaletto used mechanical aids such as rulers and compasses throughout his career.
- View of the Molo*, El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso, Texas, Kress No. K-2174, c/L 88.
- Shapley 1973 (cited in note 2), p. 163. The origin of this opinion is unclear. Alan Burroughs, the conservation

- scientist who documented much of the collection by X-radiograph, had, in contrast, noted in an undated but earlier report that the image exhibited a “skill and freedom, sense of space and independence of technique” that supported its attribution to Canaletto. Photocopy of document, Kress Foundation Archives.
14. Prussian blue has been found in every analyzed painting except for *Piazza San Marco: Looking East along the Central Line c/L 1* (circa 1723) in which ultramarine was used. Pemberton-Pigott 1989 (cited in note 5), pp. 62–3.
 15. Dispersed pigment samples were analyzed by polarized light microscopy. A gemologist’s Chelsea filter was particularly helpful in making this identification, distinguishing pigment particles that transmit red light, like ultramarine, from those that do not, like Prussian blue. The samples from the Kress painting were identical in appearance to Prussian blue particles identified by Mark Tucker in *The Ducal Palace* by Francesco Guardi in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Further microchemical tests on the Kress samples were inconclusive due to contamination by the mounting medium. For more on the use of a Chelsea filter see M.R. Schilling and D.A. Scott, “Letter to the Editor,” *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (1989), p. 137.
 16. For a discussion of the early manufacture of Prussian blue, see Jo Kirby, “Fading and colour change of Prussian blue: occurrences and early reports,” *National Gallery Technical Bulletin*, Vol. 14 (1993), pp. 62–71; and Frank S. Welsh, “Particle characteristics of Prussian blue in an historical oil paint,” *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation*, 27 (1988), pp. 55–63.
 17. Pemberton-Pigott has noted extensive reworkings of other paintings from the 1720s. See Pemberton-Pigott 2001 (cited in note 5), p. 188.
 18. Ibid. I wish to thank Viola Pemberton-Pigott for her generosity in sharing her original text in English.
 19. Other paintings seen at the recent exhibition in Venice that show evidence of this technique are: *Grand Canal: Looking North-East from near the Palazzo Corner-Spinelli to the Rialto Bridge*, Dresden Gemäldegalerie, c/L 208; *The Bacino of San Marco looking North*, Upton House, The National Trust, c/L 144; *Grand Canal: The Salute and the Dogana, from near the Palazzo Corner*, Berlin Staatliche Gemäldegalerie, c/L 181; also *Grand Canal: Looking North-East from the Palazzo Balbi to the Rialto Bridge*, Ferens Art Gallery, Hull City Museums, c/L 214.
 20. Pemberton-Pigott 2001 (cited in note 5), p. 187.
 21. For comparison see the gondoliers in the foreground of the Ferens Art Gallery painting (c/L 214) and *Grand Canal: Looking North-East from the Palazzo Balbi to the Rialto Bridge*, Ca’Rezzonico, c/L 210 and also the red-robed magistrate in the Conti painting *Il Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo*. In addition, a painting on copper of *The Molo Looking West* (c/L 89) has an almost identical grouping of magistrate figures.
 22. It is revealing to compare the Kress painting with the nearly identical version of the image in the Galleria Sabauda in Turin, Italy. Both Constable and André Corboz name the Turin painting as the primary version in their books, and there has been much confusion over the years about the relationship of the two paintings stemming from

the comparison of poor quality reproductions. In fact, the best published image and detail of the “Turin” version is actually a picture of the South Carolina painting (see André Corboz, *Canaletto: Una Venezia Immaginarica*, 2 vols., Milan: Alfieri Electa, 1985, Vol. I, fig. 35, p. 53; and Vol. II, p. 51, p. 579). In addition to the topographical inaccuracies discussed by Katharine Baetjer in her paper in this volume, several technical elements are visible even in a color transparency of the Turin painting that seem to indicate that it is a copy of the Kress painting by a follower. The conspicuous absence of black under the figures and gray under the blue water differs from Canaletto’s deliberate practice of underpainting these areas to achieve specific color and tonal effects.

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

Figs. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, pp. 188, 191, 192, and 193.

Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, SC, Samuel H.

Kress Collection (CMA 1954.44).

Fig. 3, p. 190. Courtesy of the Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli al Lingotto, Turin





FIG. 1. *The Molo, Venice, Looking West*, Luca Carlevaris, 1709, oil on canvas, $19\frac{7}{8} \times 47\frac{1}{8}$ in. (50.5 \times 119.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY.



FIG. 2. *View of the Molo*, Canaletto, ca. 1725, oil on canvas, $26\frac{1}{2} \times 32\frac{3}{4}$ in. (67.3 \times 83.2 cm). Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, SC. After treatment (see also fig. 2, p. 188).

Canaletto Paints the Molo from the Ponte della Paglia

Katharine Baetjer

VIEW PAINTING FLOURISHED in eighteenth-century Venice. The period may be said to have begun in 1703 with the publication of Luca Carlevaris's compendium of engravings, *Le Fabriche, e Vedute di Venetia*, and to have ended in 1797 with the fall of the Venetian Republic.¹ The principal view painters belonged to three succeeding generations: the Udinese Carlevaris (1663–1730) was the eldest, while his principal successors and competitors were the Venetians Canaletto (Giovanni Antonio Canal, 1697–1768), Canaletto's nephew Bernardo Bellotto (1722–1780), and Francesco Guardi (1712–1793). All painted topographical and festival scenes and *capricci*—real and imaginary buildings and ruins, unrealistically combined. As Venice's own citizens had limited interest in paintings of their native city, success in this genre depended upon the patronage of Italians living outside the Venetian Republic and of visitors from north of the Alps, notably ambassadors to the Serenissima and also English gentlemen who completed their education with travel on the European continent, on the so-called Grand Tour.

Foreign patrons preferred easily recognizable subjects: the church and piazza of San Marco; the quays and harbor basin and the island church of San Giorgio Maggiore; the Grand Canal from the Dogana da Mar, or customs house, to San Simeone Piccolo (opposite the modern train station). Such views were painted as independent single canvases, pairs, groups of four, and larger sets. A popular motif was a bird's-eye view of the quay, or Molo, to the west with the arcaded pink-and-white patterned façade of the Palazzo Ducale, the seat of Venetian government, in steep perspective to the right. The subject was a favorite with both Carlevaris (fig. 1) and Canaletto (fig. 2). In both canvases the

Fonteghetto della Farina stands at the end of the Molo with, in succession, the Granai, or Public Granaries; the Zecca, or Mint; the Biblioteca Marciana, Sansovino's famous library; and the columns of Saints Theodore and Mark. On the other side of the opening of the Grand Canal is the Dogana, crowned by a statue of Fortune standing on a golden globe supported by Atlases. To the left lies the Giudecca Canal with the island of the Giudecca and Palladio's church of the Redentore, while to the right is Longhena's Santa Maria della Salute on the Grand Canal. In readiness for the doge, a galley with a striped awning is anchored at the Molo.

Canaletto, born in the parish of San Leo, came to public notice in the early 1720s when he was in his mid-twenties. The son of a theatrical scene painter, he had worked with his father in Rome before renouncing the theater to return to Venice, where he was registered in the local painters' guild in 1720.² His reputation was established by 1723, when the Giovanelli brothers commissioned from him two enormous *capricci* to decorate their villa at Noventa Padovana, on the Brenta Canal near Padua.³ Thereafter he was recommended—in preference to Carlevaris—to the Lucchese textile merchant Stefano Conti, for whom between August 1725 and June 1726 he painted four canvases representing the Rialto Bridge, the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, and the Grand Canal seen from the Rialto Bridge and from Santa Maria della Carità.⁴ Reporting what he described as a generally held opinion, Conti's agent in Venice, Alessandro Marchesini, famously remarked that the difference between the two artists lay in the fact that in Canaletto's works "*si vede lucer entro il sole*": this remark, variously translated, seems to suggest that Carlevaris's paintings present a more uniform sunlight, while Canaletto was better able to suggest the transitory nature of light effects. The 1720s—which encompassed Canaletto's maturation and his development of an early style characterized by vigorous handling and acute sensitivity to light and atmosphere—concern us here. Modern scholarship holds that by 1730 at the latest, his work had become brighter, tighter, and in general more in accord with visitors' perceptions of the city (fig. 3).



FIG. 3. *View of the Molo*, Canaletto, ca. 1730–35, oil on canvas, 44 1/2 × 63 1/4 in. (113 × 160.6 cm). El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso, TX.

In 1933, Samuel H. Kress bought a painting by Canaletto representing *View of the Molo* (figs. 2, 5, and 6) from Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi, the Florentine count who was his principal dealer.⁵ Mr. Kress lent the painting to the National Gallery of Art, Washington from 1941 until 1952, and in 1954 the Kress Foundation presented it to the Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, South Carolina. The Columbia view of the Molo is probably to be identified with a picture consigned anonymously by the London firm Gurr Johns to Christie's, where it was sold as the property of a gentleman on June 12, 1931, as lot 59, "The Doge's Palace, Venice," measuring 26 × 32 1/4 in., for £ 483 to "Holland."⁶ Contini-Bonacossi often used an agent to buy Italian works on the London art market before World War II, and although the sale catalogue description is inadequate for purposes of identification, the correspondence in size (the Kress canvas measures 26 1/2 × 32 3/4 in.) is close and the proximate dates of the transactions are suggestive.

Roberto Longhi's opinion, inscribed on the reverse of a photograph of the picture in the Kress Archives, is dated "Roma 1933" and identifies "*questa magnifica veduta*" as a work of Canaletto's best (i.e. his early) period.⁷ The Kress Foundation then followed standard practice in soliciting additional written endorsements from William

Suida, in 1935, as well as from Giuseppe Fiocco, Raimond van Marle, and Adolfo Venturi.⁸ The picture was first published in the National Gallery of Art's 1941 *Preliminary Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture*, which included both gifts and loans to the Museum. The brief comment reflected the opinion of Canaletto expert and Boston Museum curator W.G. Constable: "Painted c. 1730. May be related in style to [the Conti pictures] . . . A version is in the Gallery of Turin."⁹

In a letter of March 17, 1954, responding to a request for further information from Suida, who by then was Kress Foundation curator of research, Constable reversed his earlier opinion:

This of all the Kress pictures is the one with which I am most familiar. After careful study and much hesitation, I've reluctantly come to the view that it is not by Canaletto and is probably a work of the earlier nineteenth century. This view is based mainly on the character of the brush work and the drawing . . . I have not been able to clear up one or two obscurities in the history. The picture is said to have come from Sir Francis Swan [typescript corrected in ink to read Ewan], London, but so far I have not managed to find anything about this collection. Moreover, there was a picture (which I have only seen in the photograph) sold in the Ashurst sale, Christie's, June 12, 1931, No. 59, which is apparently identical with the Kress picture. I'd be most grateful



FIG. 4. *View of the Molo*, after Canaletto, oil on canvas, 26 × 33 7/8 in. (66 × 86 cm). Galleria Sabauda, Turin, 1871.

for any information that could either make certain that the two paintings are the same or settle that they are in fact different.¹⁰

The various editions of the Canaletto oeuvre catalogue were prepared using annotated photographs and notes, information from which has been kindly supplied by Charles Beddington. What are apparently Constable's earliest comments on the Kress picture, made from a Witt Library photo mount on Courtauld Institute of Art stationery, indicate that at first he accepted the attribution in full. He also recorded the Ex (collection) as that of Sir Francis Ewan, London. Later, studying an image of the painting belonging to the Photo Library of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, he again concluded that it was an autograph early work. In January 1953, however, when he examined it with John Walker of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, he found both the architecture ("scratchy and thin") and the figures ("impressionist and sketchy") wanting. Walker agreed. Meanwhile, Constable seems always to have accepted the attribution to Canaletto of the Galleria Sabauda picture on the basis of the Anderson photograph, simply adding, without comment, the number 86 of the catalogue raisonné on the reverse.

Suida published a catalogue of the Kress Collection at Columbia, South Carolina in 1954, but Constable's letter of March 17 evidently came too late for inclusion.¹¹ However when, in 1962, Suida's successor Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi (the dealer's nephew) published an expanded volume, he had to take into account Constable's 1962 monograph. This he did in a note: "W. G. Constable in his recent book rejects the attribution to Canaletto and considers this painting 'perhaps by an early nineteenth-century imitator.' (!)"¹² He did not mention that it was listed as a variant of the painting in Turin. There the matter rested until 1973, when Fern Rusk Shapley, writing also for the Kress Foundation, opted for "Attributed to Canaletto."¹³ Shapley emphasized the connection with the version at the Galleria Sabauda (figs. 4, 7, and 8):



FIG. 5. *View of the Molo* (fig. 2), detail.



FIG. 6. *View of the Molo* (fig. 2), detail.



FIG. 7. *View of the Molo* (fig. 4), detail.



FIG. 8. *View of the Molo* (fig. 4), detail.

[In the Turin picture] the viewpoint, from the Ponte della Paglia, at the extreme right, is the same as in [the Columbia picture], and figures, boats, and even size of canvas correspond very closely. It would seem that one of the two paintings is a copy of the other, or that both are copies of a third, now lost. The unusual appearance of [the Columbia picture] under X-ray tends to support the opinion that this painting may be by a follower rather than by Canaletto himself.

Mario Modestini points out that Shapley was under some pressure from the Foundation not to follow Constable.¹⁴ She chose not to offer a definitive opinion as to the relative merits of the two canvases. It is curious, however, that she should have cited the evidence of the X-radiograph (see fig. 5, p. 191) of the Columbia picture as negative: what this shows is a major pentiment in the lower right, including a catenary curve which could be read as the edge of a partially lowered sail. The pentiment, together with the extension of the composition at the right edge, seems to me to support its primacy over that at the Galleria Sabauda. The Turin painting was bought in 1871 through Baron Sallier de la Tour, having belonged previously to a lawyer of the Martelli family of that city.¹⁵ It also lacks an early history, while neither the Turin nor the Kress picture has ever been included in a major exhibition.¹⁶

The Columbia view of the Molo is in a good state, as Elise Effmann explains in her paper (in this volume, pp. 189–95) but by 1997 the varnish had yellowed and the retouches discolored. Treatment at the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts afforded an opportunity to re-evaluate the picture in the light of Constable's long-standing opinion. But the "character of the brush work and the drawing" did not suggest inauthenticity. On the contrary, the handling and techniques seemed typical of Canaletto's practice in the second half of the 1720s. What then was the relationship to the Galleria Sabauda picture?¹⁷ And were there any topographical or other anomalies in either canvas or in both?

While Canaletto made numerous versions of his most popular compositions, he generally did not paint exact replicas. He showed the buildings of Venice more or less as he saw them, recording changes in and repairs to various structures as these occurred.¹⁸ Nearly 250 years later the city is largely the same, and Canaletto's audience still assumes that his topography is accurate, while the most persistent among us go out and have a look from time to time, to be sure of the details and to check for discrepancies. By contrast to the buildings, the boats and the people—individuals involved in the business of daily life, washing, building, pushing, posing—quite naturally differ from one variant of a cityscape to another. Canaletto's figures are distinctively dressed in accordance with their place of birth and their role in society; the nearer they are, the more highly they are individualized.

There is one noticeable topographical error in the Columbia painting: the subsidiary dome of Santa Maria della Salute is flanked by the two slender towers, whereas from Canaletto's chosen point of view, as indeed from the Grand Canal, one of the towers should be on the near side and the other should be largely hidden.¹⁹ At the Palazzo Ducale, additionally, there are twenty-one Gothic arches where there should be seventeen, at ground level, and thirty-eight where there should be thirty-four, on the balcony. (When seen straight on, the arcades of the building are symmetrical, with two arches above corresponding to one below. However for Canaletto, the number of arches depicted seems to have depended to some extent on the scale of the picture as well as on the degree to which he wished to emphasize the effect of recession. He did not bother to count and neither did we until recently.) In this painting the asymmetry is in fact invisible because the angle is so steep. The Columbia picture shows the entire façade of the Palazzo Ducale including the half quatrefoil at the end of the balcony, omitting only the sculpture marking the near corner of the building. The columns at ground level are partially whitewashed, apparently as a surface on which to inscribe notices intended for

the public. The last five arches, behind the Ponte della Paglia, are boarded up. The last three arches of the balcony above are partitioned off; one pane of one of the three windows is open. In the eighteenth century there were fruit and vegetable stands at the ends of the bridge. To the left of the vendor's hut shown here is a knife grinder's stall, while to the right and below, set into the masonry of the bridge, is a niche containing the tabernacle of the gondoliers' guild.

The towers of Santa Maria della Salute and the various details described above are all the same in the Sabauda picture, but there are some additional inaccuracies and uncharacteristic omissions. Of the six windows on the façade of the Palazzo Ducale, the two at each end of the Sabauda picture are aligned while the middle two, flanking the balcony, appear to be higher. In fact, as in the Columbia painting and most other Canalettos of this subject, only the two original Gothic windows at the extreme right are lower.²⁰ In the Turin painting, the statue of Justice at the summit of the façade of the Palazzo Ducale is missing, as are all the sculptures on the volutes at the Salute, and Fortune upon her golden ball has disappeared from the customs house. There were two or three principal points of arrival for visitors reaching Venice by water, one of which was the customs house. Ships of substantial size, and thus most foreign vessels, could anchor only in the basin or in the Giudecca Canal. Their merchandise passed through the customs house. The elegant building with the statue of Fortune would therefore have been the first thing many people saw upon disembarking. Canaletto rejoiced in the sharp irregular contours created by the fretwork of statuary against the sky and would not have omitted such a quantity of important architectural sculpture. It is difficult to imagine any Venetian view painter having done so. But what is most disconcerting is that all of the figures of any size in the Columbia and Sabauda pictures match, not only in their number, scale, and disposition, but also in the colors of all of their garments. There are the same officials, in red or blue, or in black robes with full-bottom wigs; the same oriental, seen from behind,

in blue trousers, a gray vest, white shirt, and red turban; the same knife grinder talking to a woman with an impatient child. These identical details, or in the case of the sculpture its absence, seem to me to support the view that the Columbia picture is the autograph version of this subject.

In the 1720s Canaletto made various sketches as well as other paintings of the Molo looking from east to west. While none can be dated with any degree of certainty, there is one festival picture with which the Columbia canvas can be usefully compared: among the young painter's most important early commissions, it represents the *Reception of the French Ambassador at the Doge's Palace*.²¹ Louis xv's ambassador, the Comte de Gery, had been in Venice since December 1723, but he did not present his credentials to the doge until November 5, 1726. He was recalled in October 1731. Canaletto's canvas must date earlier in these years rather than later, and shows him to have been greatly influenced by Carlevaris, who had already won acclaim as the inventor of this sub-genre, painting the receptions of the Abate de Pomponne in 1706, of the Duke of Manchester in 1707, and of the Conte di Colloredo in 1726. Canaletto would have advanced his career when, displacing Carlevaris, he secured Gery's important order, as had been the case with Conti's commission. In style Canaletto's figures are unusually similar to those of Carlevaris. Canaletto's *Reception of the French Ambassador* suggests that he understood the appeal to foreigners of his rival's style. To accommodate himself to their taste, he apparently introduced a blonder palette and smoother finish earlier than had once been thought.

When arriving for his official reception by the doge, a foreign ambassador disembarked from his boat at the corner of the Molo. Carlevaris and Canaletto both adopted a low viewpoint for reception pictures on account of the primacy of the ceremony playing out in the foreground, but otherwise Canaletto preferred a higher and necessarily imaginary bird's-eye view. The original impetus for the disposition of the subject absent the ceremonial aspect may have come from Carlevaris. While Canaletto's *Reception of the French*

Ambassador must date from 1726–27, there is no reason why the first of his bird’s-eye views of the Molo could not be earlier. A painting similar in subject and style to that in Columbia appeared with its pendant on the London art market in summer 2002 (fig. 9).²² Topographically, it differs in that the corner of Palazzo Ducale and more of the span of the bridge are visible at the right. Santa Maria della Salute is inaccurate in some details: the subsidiary dome is smaller than in fact, the towers are inconsistent in size, and both are too tall. The handling seems to be much the same, with proportionately less detail than in the Columbia picture on account of the smaller size of the canvas. This new view of the Molo with its pendant, showing Piazza San Marco, is believed to have been owned by Edward Southwell (1705–1755), who visited Venice in 1726.

According to the late J.G. Links, Constable devoted no less than forty years to the preparation of the first edition of his Canaletto catalogue raisonné and identified primary versions of roughly 500 compositions, with secondary versions numbering as many as twenty in some cases.²³ For the most part, Canaletto’s patrons were not Italian and until recently there were few paintings by Canaletto in public or private collections in Italy. Constable knew the Kress work but it seems improbable that he ever saw the canvas in the Galleria Sabauda, which should be identified as a somewhat damaged early copy. Links, who



FIG. 9. *View of the Molo*, Canaletto, ca. 1726, oil on canvas, 18 1/4 × 29 1/4 in. (46.4 × 74.3 cm). Private collection.

offered no additional commentary, apparently never saw either. The Kress *View of the Molo* appears to be entirely autograph and a date for it of about 1725 is supported by comparison with the Conti views of 1725–26, and with the painting that was probably commissioned or bought by Edward Southwell in the latter year.

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NOTES

1. The first Carlevaris exhibition in America was held at the Timken Museum of Art, San Diego, April 27–August 31, 2001. Charles Beddington in *Luca Carlevaris: Views of Venice* (exhib. cat., San Diego, 2001) provides an overview of the artist’s career.
2. The standard catalogue is W.G. Constable, *Canaletto: Giovanni Antonio Canal, 1697–1768*, 2 vols. (Oxford, Clarendon, 1962); a second edition was revised by J.G. Links, 2 vols. (Oxford, Clarendon, 1976), and reissued with a supplement and additional plates, 2 vols. (Oxford, Clarendon, 1989). This was followed by J.G. Links, *A Supplement to W.G. Constable’s Canaletto: Giovanni Antonio Canal: 1697–1768* (London, Pallas Athene Arts, 1998), a posthumous publication with amendments and additions by Links and Charles Beddington. The artist’s early work has been the subject of much valuable recent research, for which see especially the catalogue of the exhibition shown March 18–June 10, 2001 at the Fondazione Giorgio Cini in Venice: A. Bettagno and B.A. Kowalczyk (eds.), *Canaletto: Prima Maniera* (exhib. cat., Milan, 2001).
3. See Constable 1962 and Links 1989 (both cited in note 2), Vol. 1, figs. 479^{**} and 479^{***} and Vol. 2, p. 449, nos. 479^{**} and 479^{***}; see also Charles Beddington in Bettagno and Kowalczyk 2001 (cited in note 2), pp. 58–61, no. 30, ill. (color), and pp. 68–9, no. 34, ill. (color).
4. Most recently Kowalczyk in Bettagno and Kowalczyk 2001 (cited in note 2), pp. 144–53, nos. 62–5, ill. (color). For a complete transcription of the Conti documents see Marina Magrini, “Canaletto e dintori: i primi anni di Canaletto attraverso le lettere dei contemporanei” in Bettagno and Kowalczyk 2001, pp. 191–5 and 197–208, documents 1–24 and 26–33.
5. Constable 1962 (cited in note 2), Vol. 2, p. 218, no. 86(a). Later editions do not differ, nor is there an illustration. See also Fern Rusk Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection, Vol. 3: Italian Schools, XVI–XVIII Century* (London, Phaidon, 1973), pp. 163–4, no. K-252, fig. 315.

6. The name of the consignor has been supplied by Christie's through the good offices of Francis Russell and Jane Vernon, whose help I gratefully acknowledge. The catalogue description is generic; the size is 26 × 32 1/4 in. The modern firm of Gurr Johns holds no files dating to 1931 that could be checked.
7. The photograph bearing Longhi's expertise must have been solicited by Count Contini-Bonacossi. Unlike the other opinions in the Kress Foundation Archives, it is not stamped with the name of New York photographer Murray R. Keyes.
8. Only the opinion of Suida is dated.
9. *Preliminary Catalogue of Paintings and Sculpture*, National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C., 1941), pp. 31–2, no. 234, and *Book of Illustrations*, National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C., 1941), p. 77, no. 234. The date of acquisition is given in error as 1939, while Sir Francis Ewan is identified as the former owner. One other Kress painting bought from Contini-Bonacossi is said to have belonged to Sir Francis Ewan, Fungai's *Martyrdom of Saint Lucy*, for which see Fern Rusk Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection, Vol. 2: Italian Schools, XV–XVI Century* (London, Phaidon, 1968), p. 109, no. K-248, fig. 271.
10. The letter, the balance of which contains supporting information about the Conti pictures, is among Kress Foundation archival materials.
11. William E. Suida, *Art of the Italian Renaissance from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*, The Columbia Museum of Art (Columbia, SC, 1954), p. 59, no. 25, ill. p. 58, cites the additional opinion of F. Mason Perkins.
12. Alessandro Contini-Bonacossi, *Art of the Renaissance from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*. Columbia, SC: The Columbia Museum of Art, 1962, pp. 101–2, no. 35, fig. 35.
13. Shapley 1973 (cited in note 5), pp. 163–4. The opinion of the Tietzes has not been preserved in manuscript.
14. Conversation with Mario Modestini, September 2001.
15. Constable 1962 (cited in note 2), Vol. 2, p. 218, no. 86, noted an exhibition, *Venezia*, at the Petit Palais, Paris, in 1919. The painting was shown at the Palazzo Pitti in Florence in 1922: U. Ojetti, L. Dami, and N. Tarchiani, *La Pittura Italiana del Seicento e del Settecento alla mostra di Palazzo Pitti* (exhib. cat., Milan and Rome, 1922), pl. 43. See also Noemi Gabrielli, *Galleria Sabauda: Maestri Italiani* (Turin(?), Ilte, 1971), p. 91, pl. 162, fig. 435.
16. The exhibition history of the Kress picture: Berkshire Museum, Pittsfield, MA, *Canaletto and Bellotto*, August 2–31, 1960, No. 14; Allentown Art Museum, Allentown, PA, *The Circle of Canaletto*, February 21–March 21, 1971, No. 8.
17. For the transparency of the Sabauda picture we thank the Director of the Museum, Dr. Michaela Di Macho. It is evident that there is significant wear and damage, notably along the bottom edge and at the lower left corner.
18. On this subject see André Corboz, *Canaletto: Una Venezia Immaginarica* (Milan, Alfieri Electa, 1985), 2 vols.
19. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 52 and figs. 30–35. Figure 35 is evidently taken from a photograph of the Columbia picture and not that in Turin.
20. *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 46–7 and fig. 18, for changes Canaletto made when painting the *bacino* façade of the Palazzo Ducale.
21. For this painting belonging to the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, see A. Bettagno and B.A. Kowalczyk (eds.), *Venezia da Stato a Mito* (exhib. cat., Venice, 1997), pp. 357–9, no. 39, and pp. 218–19, color plates.
22. The pair was offered by Sotheby's, London, on July 10, 2002, as no. 79, described and illustrated in the catalogue, pp. 218–23, and sold privately.
23. Constable 1962 and Links 1989 (both cited in note 2), Vol. 1, p. xiii.

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

- Fig. 1, p. 196. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.90). Photograph © 2000 The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Figs. 2, 5, and 6, pp. 196 and 200. Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, SC, Samuel H. Kress Collection (CMA 1954.44).
- Fig. 3, p. 198. El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso, TX, Samuel H. Kress Collection (1961-6/41).
- Figs. 4, 7, and 8, pp. 199 and 201. Galleria Sabauda, Turin, 1871.
- Fig. 9, p. 204. Photograph courtesy of Sotheby's, New York, NY.



View of the Grand Canal with Dogana

Francesco Guardi, 1775–80

Oil on canvas

16 1/2 × 26 1/4 in. (41.9 × 66.7 cm)

Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, South Carolina

CMA 1954.46 (K-1947)



FIG. 1. *View of the Grand Canal with Dogana*, before cleaning and restoration.



FIG. 2. *View of the Grand Canal with Dogana* (fig. 1), after cleaning and restoration.

View of the Grand Canal with Dogana and Guardi Studio Practices

Helen Spande

THE VIEW ACROSS THE GRAND CANAL of this sunny Venetian promontory is one of approximately twenty closely related compositions attributed to the eighteenth-century painter Francesco Guardi (1712–1793). Each scene shows the activity along the water and on the quay near the customs house or Dogana di Mare. In this version, the church of Santa Maria della Salute occupies a noble position on the right of the canvas. Its slender bell tower and seminary buildings extend behind, partially obscured by the dark brick, crenellated warehouse of the Dogana. Miniature characters depicted with the briefest gesture of the brush pose alone or in pairs against the architecture. Spaced elegantly across the foreground, three gondolas ferry passengers across the canal. The gondoliers' poles leave delicate white ruffles on the surface of the water.

With its generous portion of clear sky, this painting is a classic Venetian view painting or *veduta*. English travelers on the “Grand Tour” found these appealing, affordable¹ views to be the perfect souvenir. This version of the popular scene, *View of the Grand Canal with Dogana*, was purchased by Samuel H. Kress in 1953 (figs. 1 and 2). Now in the Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina, this work has close counterparts in the Wallace Collection, London, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City, and elsewhere. Examination of the painting shows it to be in good condition and structurally sound. The scene is painted on a lightweight, coarsely woven canvas. The painting has been glue-lined, and the canvas visible on the reverse is of modern origin.

The painting was brought to the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University for cleaning; it had a thick natural resin varnish layer that had become severely discolored over time (see fig. 1). Removal of the old yellow varnish not only uncovered the intended color relationships and illusion of depth in the painting, but also afforded an opportunity for a thorough examination. X-radiography is one technique that often reveals aspects of the artist's process such as which components were laid in on the canvas first, or whether their shapes were modified during painting. In this case, the X-radiograph provided the surprising discovery of an entirely unrelated composition beneath the surface image. Guardi painted this Venetian scene on top of a decorative floral composition showing symmetrical scrollwork flourishes framing a round vase with flowers (fig. 3).

While the surface scene appears not to have been cropped, the floral image underneath was cropped along the left side and top. Only the canvas weave along the lower edge shows clear

cupping, the faint scallop pattern along the edges formed by slightly uneven tensions on the weave of the canvas as it is stretched for the first time and nailed to the stretcher. Once the canvas is sized and painted, the cupping pattern becomes a fixed record. The presence or absence of cupping usually provides sufficient information to determine whether the image still retains its original dimensions, for a canvas will be missing cupping along the sides that have been cut down. In this case, the cupping pattern was established when the floral composition was painted and cannot yield anything conclusive about the Venetian scene.

There are several precedents for the discovery of a decorative design underneath a Guardi view painting. As discussed in the catalogue of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italian paintings at the National Gallery of Art, Washington,² both *View on the Cannaregio Canal, Venice* (fig. 4) and *Temporary Tribune in the Campo San Zanipolo, Venice* (fig. 6) have been painted over fragments of earlier works also revealed by X-radiography (figs. 5 and 7). The former appears to have been made from the



Fig. 3. *View of the Grand Canal with Dogana* (fig. 1), X-radiograph.

left end of a decorative painting with scrollwork (overall a stronger and clearer design than the one beneath *View of the Grand Canal with Dogana*) while the latter appears to have been painted over a still life of a vase of flowers. This recycling of canvas illustrates the thrifty practices of the Guardi studio. The National Gallery of Art finds the decorative underpainting with scrollwork to resemble fairly closely the design on a number of altar frontals that were made by Francesco Guardi and his workshop. Guardi also painted a number of floral still lifes, though the symmetrical nature of the large flourishes in this painting make it unlikely that this is one of them. Unfortunately neither of the National Gallery of Art underpaintings matches the floral composition under this Venetian landscape.



FIG. 4. *View on the Cannaregio Canal, Venice*, Francesco Guardi, ca. 1775-1780, oil on canvas, $19\frac{3}{4} \times 30\frac{1}{4}$ in. (50×76.8 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

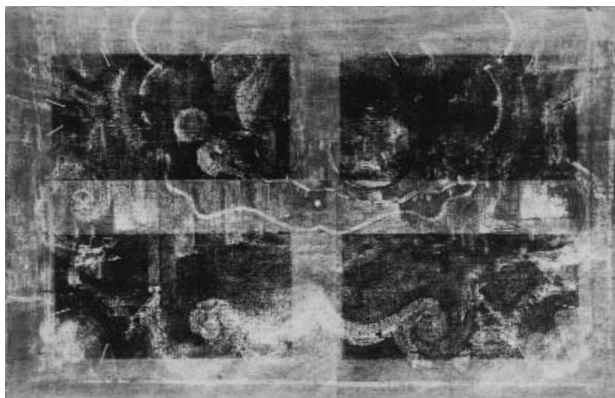


FIG. 5. *View on the Cannaregio Canal, Venice* (fig. 4), X-radiograph.



FIG. 6. *Temporary Tribune in the Campo San Zanipolo, Venice*, Francesco Guardi, 1782 or after, oil on canvas, $14\frac{3}{4} \times 12\frac{3}{8}$ in. (37.5×31.5 cm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

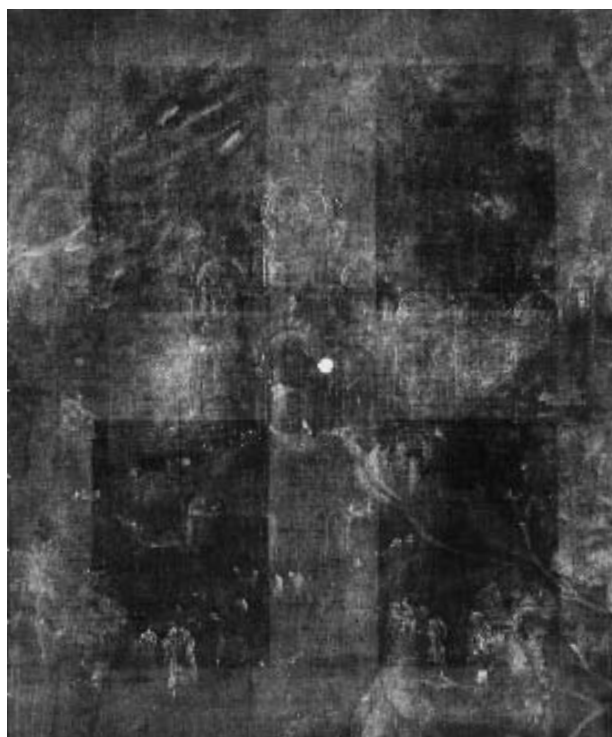


FIG. 7. *Temporary Tribune in the Campo San Zanipolo, Venice* (fig. 6), X-radiograph.

By examining some areas of the X-radiograph image where the lead white highlights of the underlying decoration show most clearly, it is possible to see that the painting underneath shows extensive wear and damage. There are no regular scrape marks or other traces to suggest the paint was sanded down or intentionally abraded in preparation for repainting, but this is a possibility. The only other conclusion is that the surface had become damaged from wear and use during its original incarnation as a decorative panel. Whereas some artists simply change their minds about a composition and paint over it immediately, scraping off paint that may not even have dried fully, in this case the original canvas appears to be considerably older than Guardi's view painting.

There is a warm brown oil ground visible beneath the water in the foreground. This dark ground shows through especially in areas of abrasion or where the paint is thinly applied. Around the upper edges of the buildings, a pale violet layer appears. This may have been a ground layer for the sky. Along the right margin, one structure was painted over the blue of the sky, which gives it a different tonality than the rest of the architecture that has preparation layers in another color. The painting of the sky was done in two campaigns: a glossy sky blue beneath a leaner, grayer light blue, separated by a layer of varnish. It is possible that the second layer is a later overpaint, but it is also possible that the modifications were made while the work was still in Guardi's studio. The craquelure penetrates through the ground layer, and in no place is there obvious overpaint that crosses over it, demonstrating that the top sky layer is quite old. When one is aware of the existence of the original floral design, this makes more sense. The design from the underlying decoration probably began to show through not long after the work was painted and varnished and required masking by the second sky layer.

Though the brushwork is quick and gestural, it is also fairly precise, and the gondoliers are described with brief but expressive marks. Some

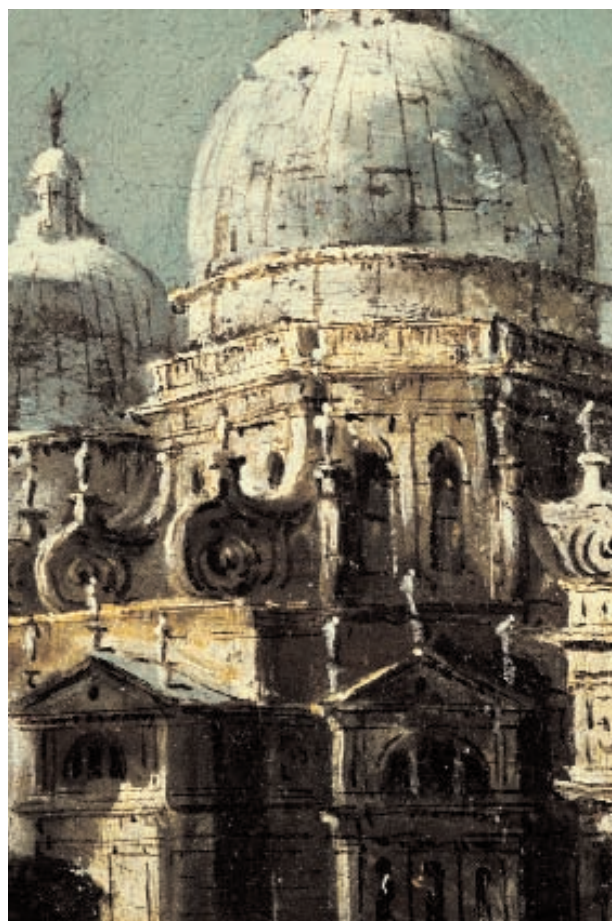


FIG. 8. *View of the Grand Canal with Dogana* (fig. 1), detail of dome.

of the details have a slightly mechanical quality, such as the white prow of the craft in the lower right corner, but this may be a result of the overall wear of the surface. The architecture is hardly Guardi's most exacting rendition, but it is pleasing in its detail and for the play of light and shadow. It appears that the fine dark lines of the architecture have been rendered not with a brush, but with a quill pen, for the even lines show the tell-tale split where the pressure of the stroke forces the nib apart. This drawing also leaves tiny gouged trails in the wet paint beneath the dome of Santa Maria della Salute (fig. 8).

Some research into Guardi's materials has already been conducted; these analyses used a variety of techniques including scanning electron microscopy coupled with electron dispersive spectroscopy, polarized light microscopy, and

X-radiograph diffraction.³ These findings provide a means of comparing the pigments used in this painting with Guardi's known palette.

Guardi's standard palette consists of vermilion, lead white, bone black, green earth, van Dyck brown, Naples yellow, iron oxide, red lake, and earth pigments such as raw sienna and yellow ochre. For a blue pigment, Guardi has been shown to have used both Prussian blue and ultramarine as well as ultramarine ash. It is likely that he chose among these based on availability and expense. A ubiquitous finding both in other Guardi's and in this painting is that the paint contains both tiny particles and large coarse agglomerates. Even Prussian blue, a pigment characterized by particles of submicron size, occurs in aggregates large enough to see clearly without magnification. The visual effect of mixing coarse and fine particles is both characteristic of Guardi and an easily recognized and replicated technique. This texture alone cannot be used to prove that a painting is an authentic Francesco Guardi. However, this data in conjunction with the pigment analysis of *View of the Grand Canal with Dogana* does allow us to draw some conclusions. Several different colors were analyzed by polarized light microscopy, and essentially all of the pigments found, including Prussian blue and Naples yellow, are consistent with the expected palette of Francesco Guardi. For example, in terms of the chronological development of pigments, Naples yellow "enjoyed its greatest popularity between roughly 1750 and 1850 after which it gradually became replaced by lead chromate and cadmium sulfide yellows."⁴ However, Naples yellow is still available today. Its precursor, lead-tin yellow, was commonly used until about 1626 and disappeared completely after the middle of the eighteenth century. Prussian blue, first made in 1704 and also used by Canaletto, was an inexpensive alternative to ultramarine blue and well suited to the hues of the sea and the sky.

Although no single piece of evidence definitively proves that this painting is a work by the master's hand, the cumulative effect of this examination's findings add support to a Guardi attribution. The support, the pigments, and the

painting technique—even the underlying decorative image—are consistent with the materials available at the time and match phenomena found in other Francesco Guardi paintings.

Helen Spande received a B.A. in Chemistry and Studio Art from Williams College, and completed her training at the Conservation Center, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, where she received an M.A. in Art History. Her specialization is in paintings conservation. She is currently the Assistant Collection Care Coordinator at New York University's Villa La Pietra in Florence, Italy.

NOTES

1. Francesco Guardi's clients were probably "middle-class Venetians and English visitors of modest means" as discussed in De Grazia et al. (1996), pp. 120–21.
2. De Grazia et al. (1996).
3. Discussed in Albertson and Coddington (1981), pp. 101–19.
4. Feller (1986), p. 226.

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PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

- Figs. 1, 2, 3, and 8, pp. 206, 208, and 210. Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, SC, Samuel H. Kress Collection (CMA 1954.46).
- Figs. 4 and 5, p. 209. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Samuel H. Kress Collection (1939.1.113). Images ©2005 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
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Appendices & Index

Appendix I

*Kress Collection Paintings Treated
in the Samuel H. Kress Program in Paintings Conservation
at the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts,
New York University*

1988–89 (PILOT PROGRAM)

- K-29 Riminese School, *Crucifixion*, Allentown, Pennsylvania; Jennifer Sherman
K-239 Anton Raphael Mengs, *Portrait of Pope Clement XIII*, New Orleans, Louisiana; Claire Gerhardt
K-420 Andrea di Giusto, *Nativity*, Allentown, Pennsylvania; Diane Harvey
K-1025 Alunno di Benozzo, *Holy Trinity with Saints*, Denver, Colorado; Gwendolyn Jones
K-1544 Salvatore Rosa, *Landscape with Soldiers in a Ravine*, New Orleans, Louisiana; Ellen Pratt

1989–90 (NO KRESS CLASS OFFERED)

- K-541 Pesellino and Studio, *The Seven Virtues*, Birmingham, Alabama; Jennifer Sherman (in Dianne Dwyer Modestini's studio)

1990–91 (NO KRESS CLASS OFFERED)

- K-540 Pesellino and Studio, *The Seven Liberal Arts*, Birmingham, Alabama; Gwendolyn Jones (in Dianne Dwyer Modestini's studio)

1991–92 (NO KRESS CLASS OFFERED)

- K-1431 Leandro Bassano, *The Last Judgement*, Birmingham, Alabama; Annette Rupprecht
K-1814 Sebastiano Ricci, *Christ Resurrected Surrounded by Angels*, Columbia, South Carolina; Annette Rupprecht
K-1952 Alessandro Magnasco, *Pulcinella Singing to his Many Children*, Columbia, South Carolina; Annette Rupprecht

1992–93

- K-17 Niccolò di Pietro Gerini, *Four Crowned Martyrs Before Diocletian*, Denver, Colorado; Annette Rupprecht
K-60 Garofalo, *Madonna in Glory*, Coral Gables, Florida; Annette Rupprecht
K-74 Jacopo di Cione, *The Eucharistic Ecce Homo*, Denver, Colorado; Annette Rupprecht
K-367 Josse Lieferinxe, *Abraham Visited by Three Angels*, Denver, Colorado; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
K-1240 Studio of Botticelli, *Madonna and Child*, El Paso, Texas; Isabelle Tokumaru
K-1276 Attributed to Alessandro Tiarini, *The Warrior*, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Ann Baldwin
K-1286 Guidoccio Cozzarelli, *Scenes from the Life of the Virgin*, Coral Gables, Florida; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
K-1691 Bellotto, *Entrance to a Palace*, El Paso, Texas; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
K-1711 Elizabeth Vigée-Lebrun, *The Grafyn van Schönfeld with her Daughter*, Tucson, Arizona; Molly March
K-1749 Battista Dossi, *The Hunt of the Caledonian Boar*, El Paso, Texas; Jean Dommermuth

1993–94

- K-521 Master of the Louvre Life of the Virgin, *Annunciation Diptych*, Columbia, South Carolina; Molly March
- K-1035 Horace Vernet, *Marchesa Cunegonda Misciattelli*, Tucson, Arizona; Annette Rupprecht and Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1202 Girolamo di Carpi, *Ruggiero Saving Angelica*, El Paso, Texas; Suzanne Siano
- K-1557 School of Perugino, *Saint Sebastian*, Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, New Jersey (formerly at the New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, New Jersey); Annette Rupprecht
- K-1589 Bernardo Bellotto, *Imaginary Landscape*, Columbia, South Carolina; Jean Dommermuth
- K-1637 Carlo Dolci, *Vision of St. Louis of Toulouse*, New Orleans, Louisiana; Annette Rupprecht
- K-1665 Coccorante, *Port in Calm Weather*, Coral Gables, Florida; Dianne Dwyer Modestini and Annette Rupprecht
- K-1779 Battista da Vicenza, *The Crucifixion*, New Orleans, Louisiana; Elma O'Donohue
- K-1986 Van Beyeren, *Banquet Still Life*, Seattle, Washington; Annette Rupprecht and Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1997 Peter Paul Rubens, *The Last Supper*, Seattle, Washington; Dianne Dwyer Modestini

Annette Rupprecht treated 16 additional paintings on site at the El Paso Museum of Art in June 1993.

1994–95

- K-18 Attributed to Niccolò da Varallo, *St. John Preaching*, Columbia, South Carolina; Kirsten Younger
- K-113 Girolamo Genga, *St. Augustine Giving the Habit of his Order to Three Catechumens*, Columbia, South Carolina; Friederike Steckling
- K-592 Master of the Goodhart Madonna, *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* (five panel polyptych) Birmingham, Alabama; Jennifer Sherman
- K-1084 Master of the Blessed Clare, *Nativity*, Coral Gables, Florida; Jennifer Sherman
- K-1275 Ambrogio Borgognone, *Madonna and Child*, Coral Gables, Florida; Lucrezia Kargere
- K-1402 Lavinia Fontana, *Christ with the Symbols of the Passion*, El Paso, Texas; Annette Rupprecht
- K-1629 Rocco Marconi, *The Adulteress before Christ*, Coral Gables, Florida; Suzanne Siano
- K-1666 Coccorante, *Port in a Tempest*, Coral Gables, Florida; Dianne Dwyer Modestini et al.
- K-2148 Francois Boucher, *Joseph Presenting his Father and Brothers to Pharaoh*, Columbia, South Carolina; Annette Rupprecht

1995–96

- K-11 Follower of Mantegna, *The Triumph of Time*, Denver, Colorado; Kirsten Younger
- K-222 Girolamo di Benvenuto, *Venus and Cupid*, Denver, Colorado; Mika Koyano
- K-484 Antolinez y Sarabia, *Jacob and Rachel at the Well*, El Paso, Texas; Friederike Steckling
- K-1049 Follower of Cosimo Rosselli, *Adoration of the Child*, Seattle, Washington; Kirsten Younger
- K-1640 Bernardo Strozzi, *Saint Catherine*, Columbia, South Carolina; Jennifer Sherman
- K-1729 Bacchiacca, *Lute Player*, New Orleans, Louisiana; Rikke Foulke
- K-1787 Luca Giordano, *The Deposition of Christ*, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1949 Gentileschi, *Portrait of a Young Woman as a Sibyl*, Houston, Texas; technical examination, Jennifer Sherman and Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-2071 Vincenzo Catena, *Niccolò Fabbri*, Columbia, South Carolina; Dianne Dwyer Modestini

Jennifer Sherman treated 13 additional paintings on site at Columbia, Missouri in 1995–96, as follows:

- K-337 Bramantino, *Madonna and Child*
K-344 Giuseppe Bazzani, *The Imbecile (A Laughing Man)*
K-372 Alunno di Benozzo, *Processional Cross*
K-1033 Girolamo Romanino, *Christ Blessing*
K-1097 Altobello Melone, *Madonna and Child*
K-1112 Paris Bordone, *Thetis and Hephaestus*
K-1180 Attributed to Carlo Francesco Nuvolone, *Portrait of Giovanni Battista Silva*
K-1182 Attributed to Gian Francesco de'Maineri, *Ex Voto*
K-1195A Michele di Matteo, *Mater Dolorosa*
K-1195B Michele di Matteo, *St. John the Evangelist*
K-1590 Pietro Rotari, *Portrait of a Young Woman*
K-1633 Workshop of Rembrandt, *Abraham Sacrificing Isaac*
K-1638 Bartolomeo Montagna, *Temptation of St. Anthony*
- 1996–97
- K-12 Follower of Mantegna, *Triumph of Chastity*, Denver, Colorado; Wendy Partridge
K-70 Defendente Ferrari, *Christ in the House of Mary and Martha*, Denver, Colorado;
Dianne Dwyer Modestini
K-300 Giovanni dal Ponte, *Saint George*, Columbia, South Carolina; Sue Ann Chui
K-493 Vicenza Foppa, *Saint Christopher*, Denver, Colorado; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
K-595 Lorenzo Lotto, *Saint Jerome*, Allentown, Pennsylvania; Jennifer Sherman
K-1018 Alvise Vivarini, *St. John the Baptist*, Denver, Colorado; Annette Rupprecht
K-1223 Tanzio da Varallo, *Saint John in the Wilderness*, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- 1997–98
- K-10 Follower of Mantegna, *Triumph of Divinity*, Denver, Colorado; Sue Ann Chui
K-13 Follower of Mantegna, *Triumph of Love*, Denver, Colorado; Jennifer Sherman
K-14 Follower of Mantegna, *Triumph of Fame*, Denver, Colorado; Friederike Steckling
K-15 Follower of Mantegna, *Triumph of Death*, Denver, Colorado; Helen Im
K-252 Attributed to Canaletto, *View of the Molo*, Columbia, South Carolina; Elise Effmann
K-300 Giovanni dal Ponte, *Madonna and Child*, Columbia, South Carolina; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
K-300 Giovanni dal Ponte, *Archangel Michael*, Columbia, South Carolina; Jennifer Sherman
K-378 Fungai, *Saint Sigismund*, Columbia, Missouri; Friederike Steckling
K-596 Follower of Pontormo, *Portrait of a Lady*, Staten Island, New York; class project
K-1134 Nicolaes Maes, *Portrait of a Lady*, Columbia, South Carolina; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
K-1138 Follower of Jacopo del Casentino, *Saint Prosper*, Staten Island, New York; class project
K-1142 Follower of Giovanni di Paolo, *Madonna Adoring the Child*, Staten Island, New York; class project
K-1236 Attributed to Michele di Ridolfo, *Archangel Raphael with Tobias*, Staten Island, New York; class project
K-1788 Italian School, *The Crucifixion*, Staten Island, New York; class project
K-1866 Murillo, *Virgin of the Annunciation*, Houston, Texas; Friederike Steckling
K-1932 Attributed to Beccafumi, *Venus and Cupid with Vulcan*, New Orleans, Louisiana; Wendy Partridge and Dianne Dwyer Modestini
K-2189 Sebastiano del Piombo, *Anton Francesco degli Albizzi*, Houston, Texas; Dianne Dwyer Modestini

1998–99

- K-81 Follower of Pinturicchio, *Madonna and Child in a Landscape*, Alexander City, Alabama; Winstone Wells
- K-127 Attributed to Paris Bordone, *Diana as Huntress*, Alexander City, Alabama; class project
- K-525 Master of the Bambino Vispo (Starnina), *Saint Nicholas of Bari*, El Paso, Texas; Helen Spande
- K-1196 Giovanni Battista da Udine, *Madonna and Child Enthroned*, Alexander City, Alabama; Mario Modestini
- K-1197 Allegretto Nuzi, *Crucifixion*, Birmingham, Alabama; Helen Spande
- K-1263 Francesco Zaganelli, *Pieta*, Tucson, Arizona; Friederike Steckling
- K-1401 Andrea de Bellis (formerly given to Cavallino), *The Sacrifice of Noab*, Houston, Texas; Helen Im
- K-1662 Juan Pantoja de la Cruz, *Margaret of Austria, Queen of Spain*, Houston, Texas; Elise Effmann
- K-1705 Francesco Castiglione, *The Sacrifice of Noab*, El Paso, Texas; Molly March
- K-1801 Jacopo Tintoretto and Assistant, *Gabriele Emo*, Seattle, Washington; Jennifer Sherman

1999–2000

- K-391 Pietro Rotari, *A Girl in a Red Dress*, El Paso, Texas; Winstone Wells
- K-392 Pietro Rotari, *A Girl in a Blue Dress*, El Paso, Texas; Meghan Goldmann
- K-464 Giuseppe Maria Crespi, *Cupids Frolicking*, El Paso, Texas; Jennifer Sherman
- K-465 Giuseppe Maria Crespi, *Cupids Frolicking*, El Paso, Texas; Jennifer Sherman
- K-1067 Girolamo Romanino, *Madonna and Child*, Savannah, Georgia; Winstone Wells
- K-1146 Giovanni Larciani, *Madonna and Child*, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania; Meghan Goldmann
- K-1274 Marco Basaiti, *St. Anthony of Padua*, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania; Helen Spande
- K-1404 Giuseppe Maria Crespi, *The Visitation*, Tucson, Arizona; Jennifer Sherman and Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1569 Michelangelo Associate, *Madonna and Child with Saint John*, New York, New York; Molly March
- K-1947 Francesco Guardi, *View of Grand Canal with Dogana*, Columbia, South Carolina; Helen Spande

2000–2001

- K-201 Tuscan School, *Crucifixion*, Coral Gables, Florida; Sandhja Jain
- K-543 Francesco d'Antonio, *Madonna and Child*, Denver, Colorado; Matthew Hayes
- K-1033 Girolamo Romanino, *Salvator Mundi*, Columbia, Missouri; Sue Ann Chui
- K-1179 Taddeo di Bartolo, *Madonna and Child*, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Jennifer Sherman
- K-1530 De Ferrari, *Joseph's Coat Brought to Jacob*, El Paso, Texas; Winstone Wells
- K-1716 Follower of Cimabue, *Madonna and Child*, Columbia, South Carolina; Sue Ann Chui
- K-1726 Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Coronation of the Virgin*, Denver, Colorado; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1764 Bernardino Luini, *Pieta*, Houston, Texas; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1776 Macrino d'Alba, *Adoration of the Shepherds*, El Paso, Texas; Isabelle Duvernois

2001–02

- K-122 Jan van der Straet (previously Italian school mid-16th century), *The Charity of St. Nicholas*, Columbia, South Carolina; Monica Griesbach and Karen Thomas
- K-256 Spinello Aretino, *Madonna and Child*, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania; Monica Griesbach
- K-318 Antoniazio Romano, *Crucifixion with St. Francis*, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania; Karen Thomas
- K-428 Giovanni da Bologna, *Madonna and Child*, Denver, Colorado; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-544 Perugino, *Saint Bartholomew*, Birmingham, Alabama; Molly March

- K-1108B Giovanni di Ser Giovanni, *St. Bernardino of Siena Preaching*, Birmingham, Alabama; Monica Griesbach
- K-1434 Osservanza Master (formerly Sienese School), *The Adoration of the Shepherds with St. John the Baptist and St. Bartholomew*, El Paso, Texas; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1541 Agostino Tassi, *Landscape*, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania; Matthew Hayes
- K-1569 Michelangelo Associate, *Madonna and Child with Saint John*, New York, New York; Molly March and Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1569 Frame of Michelangelo Follower, New York, New York; Sue Ann Chui
- K-1625 Cesare da Sesto, *Madonna and Child with Sts. John and George*, San Francisco, California; Dianne Dwyer Modestini

2002–03

- K-337 Bramantino, *Madonna and Child*, Columbia, Missouri; Molly March and Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-347 Giampietrino, *Cleopatra*, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania; Nica Gutman
- K-427 Correggio, *Portrait of a Young Woman*, Coral Gables, Florida; Molly March, Monica Griesbach and Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1626 Bernardo Zenale, *Madonna and Child with Saints*, Denver, Colorado; Dianne Dwyer Modestini and Karen Thomas
- K-1636 Francois Perrier, *Galatea*, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania; Monica Griesbach and Wanji Seo
- K-1639 Giulio Carpioni, *Bacchanal*, Columbia, South Carolina; Joanne Klaar

2003–04

- K-430 Leonardo Studio, *Madonna and Child*, Denver, Colorado; Nica Gutman
- K-544 Pietro Perugino, *St. Bartholomew*, Birmingham, Alabama; Nica Gutman
- K-551 Taddeo di Bartolo, *St. James Major*, Memphis, Tennessee; Wanji Seo
- K-552 Taddeo di Bartolo, *St. John the Baptist*, Memphis, Tennessee; Joanne Klaar
- K-553 Taddeo di Bartolo, *St. Catherine of Alexandria*, New Orleans, Louisiana; Corey D'Augustine
- K-554 Taddeo di Bartolo, *Bishop Saint Blessing*, New Orleans, Louisiana; Lauren Fly

2004–05

- K-1048 Attributed to L'Ortolano, *The Presentation in the Temple*, Tempe, Arizona; Kelly Keegan
- K-1228 Bicci di Lorenzo, *The Nativity*, Tempe, Arizona; Amanda Frisosky
- K-1816A Giuseppe Zais, *Landscape*, Tempe, Arizona; Lauren Fly

ADDITIONAL KRESS PAINTINGS TREATED PRIOR TO, OUTSIDE THE CONTEXT OF THE PROGRAM, OR ON SITE

- K-148 Albertinelli (formerly attributed to Fra Bartolommeo), *Madonna and Child with Saints and Angels*, Columbia, South Carolina; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-232 Tiepolo, *Portrait of a Boy Holding a Book*, New Orleans, Louisiana (on site); Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-255 Hals, *The Young Fisherman*, Allentown, Pennsylvania; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-316 Sellaio, *Adoration of the Magi*, Memphis, Tennessee; Rob Sawchuck
- K-357 Attributed to Palma Vecchio, *Portrait of a Man*, Coral Gables, Florida; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1088 Biagio d'Antonio, *The Adoration of the Child with Saints and Angels*, Tulsa, Oklahoma (on site); Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1103 Girolamo da Santa Croce, *The Annunciation*, Columbia, South Carolina; Dianne Dwyer Modestini

- K-1108A Giovanni di Ser Giovanni, *St. Anthony Tempted by Gold*, Birmingham, Alabama; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1111 Garofalo, *The Meditation of St. Jerome*, New Orleans, Louisiana; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1114 Magnasco, *Landscape with Figures*, Birmingham, Alabama; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1203 Beccafumi, *Vision of Saint Catherine*, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1220 Vincenzo Foppa, *St. Paul*, New Orleans, Louisiana; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1274 Canaletto, *View of the Molo*, El Paso, Texas; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1410 Botticelli, *Nativity*, Columbia, South Carolina; Mario Modestini
- K-1623 Domenichino, *Madonna of Loreto Appearing to Three Saints*, Raleigh, North Carolina (on site); Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1653 Follower of Mantegna, *Madonna and Child*, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1695 Licinio, *Allegory*, Coral Gables, Florida; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1710 Attributed to Bellini, *Portrait of a Bearded Man*, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1723 Florentine School ca. 1475, *Madonna and Child with an Angel*, Memphis, Tennessee; Rob Sawchuck
- K-1773 Tanzio da Varallo, *Rest on the Flight to Egypt*, Houston, Texas; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1774A Gaulli, *The Sacrifice of Isaac*, Atlanta, Georgia (on site); Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1774B Gaulli, *The Thanksgiving of Noah*, Atlanta, Georgia (on site); Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1805 Canaletto, *The Piazzetta in Venice*, Allentown, Pennsylvania; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1806 Canaletto, *View of the Grand Canal*, Birmingham, Alabama (on site); Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1808 Guardi, *Santa Maria della Salute*, Coral Gables, Florida; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1874 Titian, *Adoration of the Child*, Raleigh, North Carolina; Mario Modestini
- K-1914 Bellotto, *Market Place at Pirna*, Houston, Texas; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1949 Gentileschi, *Portrait of a Young Woman as a Sibyl*, Houston, Texas (on site); Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-1953 Magnasco, *The Supper of Pulcinella and Columbina*, Raleigh, North Carolina (on site); Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-2090 Attributed to Jacob van Ruisdael, *Westphalian Landscape*, Allentown, Pennsylvania; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-2112 Stanzone, *Assumption of the Virgin*, Raleigh, North Carolina (on site); Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-2120 de Hooch, *Nursing Mother and Children in an Interior*, San Francisco, California; Mario Modestini
- K-2121 Mastelletta, *Landscape with Figures*, Coral Gables, Florida; Dianne Dwyer Modestini
- K-2185 Steen, 'Soo de Ouden Songen,' Allentown, Pennsylvania; Dianne Dwyer Modestini

Appendix II

The Distribution of the Kress Collection

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

1,815 works of art

KRESS SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

200 works of art

Metropolitan Museum of Art

Morgan Library

Philadelphia Museum of Art

KRESS REGIONAL COLLECTIONS

785 works of art

Allentown Art Museum

Birmingham Museum of Art

Columbia Museum of Art

Denver Art Museum

El Paso Museum of Art

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

High Museum of Art

Honolulu Academy of Arts

Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami

Memphis Brooks Museum of Art

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

New Orleans Museum of Art

North Carolina Museum of Art

Philbrook Museum of Art

Portland Art Museum

Seattle Art Museum

University of Arizona Museum of Art

KRESS STUDY COLLECTIONS

285 works of art

Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College
Arizona State University Art Museum, Tempe
Armstrong-Browning Library, Baylor University
Austin Arts Center, Trinity College
Bowdoin College Museum of Art
Samek Art Gallery, Bucknell University
David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago
Doris Ulmann Galleries, Berea College
Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Fairfield University
Georgia Museum of Art, University of Georgia
Howard University Gallery of Art
Indiana University Art Museum
Mead Art Museum, Amherst College
Museo de Arte de Ponce
Museum of Art and Archaeology,
University of Missouri, Columbia
Pomona College Museum of Art
Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden,
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
Snite Museum of Art, University of Notre Dame
Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas
Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences
Vanderbilt University Fine Arts Gallery
Williams College Museum of Art

KRESS GIFTS

50 institutions received 125 works of art

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