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UGOLINO LORENZETTI



"UGOLINO LORENZETTI": NATIVITY OF OUR LORD
FOGG MUSEUM OF ART, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

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"UGOLINO LORENZETTI": PART ONE · BY BERNARD BERENSON

THE Fogg Museum of Harvard University has recently acquired a large Trecento picture which represents the Nativity of Our Lord (Plate). As a work of art, it appeals to the initiated by qualities which make it a masterpiece of Medieval Siena. As a problem in connoisseurship, it is interesting enough to stimulate the student to the exercise of all his faculties.

To begin with, we must make acquaintance with the aspect and character of the painting. We shall then examine and cross-examine the evidence it offers of its own origin and kinship. After which, it will be in order to look abroad for other works by the same hand. If we find a sufficient number we shall try to reconstruct the artistic personality of their author, and to determine how he was related to his contemporaries.

I

Before a cave, half masked by a Gothic pavilion, sits the stately and placid Mother of Our Lord, with wrists crossed over her lap. She receives the homage of an eager shepherd who falls at her feet. Doing this, he blocks the entrance to the right, so that of his companion we see only a gesticulating hand. Opposite sits Joseph thinking his own thoughts. Between them stand the basin and ewer for washing the Holy Child, and the Holy Child himself lies swaddled in the manger with the pious ox and ass putting their sentimental heads together over Him. Up above under the low ceilings of the toy edifice, in the midst of cherubim and lovely angels in adoration, the Eternal appears sending down His Spirit, the Dove, upon the Blessed Infant.

Such in brief is what is presented to our eyes. It is no ordinary treatment of the subject. Theology and ritual must have dictated some of it—the Theophany undoubtedly. But what of the Holy Virgin? She does not lie as usual, reclining on a couch a little

How is Bayly

to one side of the action, which, in early treatments of the Nativity, always centers close about the Child, but sits almost enthroned as the most prominent figure of the drama. The shepherd gazes at her with a yearning ardor most unusual, as if it were she alone he had come to worship; and for the nonce, neither of them seems to think of turning to the Babe. It is hard to account for a design so out of the common run, unless it was mere Mariolatry, the tide of which, after more than a century of Franciscan propaganda, was then nearly full. For my part, I can recall nothing exactly like it in the Italian painting of the time. And unique too, so far as I can remember, is this manifestation of the Eternal with His Spirit, instead of the star, descending upon the Child. Was this too inspired by the Franciscan passion for realizing Christianity in the simplest human terms, and with human shapes? Or was the whole scene inspired by the fresh recollection of some Christmas miracle play which the painter had just witnessed? This would help to explain the action of the shepherd and the flimsiness of the architecture, but scarcely to account for the Theophany, seeing how unlikely it is that at so early a date they had the means for staging it. And what about the dramatic hand, all that is visible of the other shepherd? So unprecedented and unexpected is such an innovation that I am led to ask whether this Nativity did not form the central part of a triptych like Pietro Lorenzetti's Birth of the Virgin, wherein flanking panels continued the scene so that the figure owning the hand appeared on the right. Even this would be original enough.

We ask questions like these not to answer them—a task which must be left to the special student of Medieval theology, thought, and life—but to draw attention to what is unusual in the picture regarded as illustration. Leaving all that now and turning to what in my vocabulary I have called "Decoration," we cannot expect that side of the work to be so full of peculiarities, for the simple reason that decoration offers much less scope for originality. In decoration, quality is nearly everything, and individuality nearly nothing, counting seldom, indeed, for more than mere novelty—an element in itself seductive and alluring, but of fugitive and evanescent effect. Bearing in mind that this Nativity is Sienese, and, as we shall see presently, of a date not later than 1340 and perhaps earlier, there

are three elements only in its quality which may be counted as individual and characteristic of its author.

In the first place, the tonality is neither the silvery one of Duccio nor the golden one of Simone Martini, and still less is it the opaque grayish-greenish one of the followers who hovered between these two chiefs of the school. The tonality of our Nativity is a thing apart, a work of rich and satisfying coloring, strong and soft, a sort of orange brown out of which flash and sparkle beautiful blues and grape purples.

In the next place, I find that the Madonna is more massive, more monumental, more compact than Sieneese works of that time were wont to be. Her drapery is simpler and more severe. I should never mistake her for a Florentine figure, and yet she almost has the tactile values of one. Finally, the arabesque of ductile and fluent lines formed by the contours and draperies of the shepherd is rare in art so early. Contrasting with the immobile gravity of the Virgin, it anticipates the ecstatic and swift style of a romantic painter of two whole generations later, Lorenzo Monaco.

Apart, however, from any question of originality, this work, for its qualities of composition, drawing, modeling and technique, deserves a place with the most convincing, most impressive, and most sumptuous achievements of Sieneese painting.

II

We are now sufficiently acquainted with the picture to begin our inquiries regarding its origin and kinship.

A process of elimination so rapid as to be almost as unconscious as the spokes of a swiftly turning wheel are indistinguishable, brings us in an instant to Siena as the school, and the fourteenth century as the period to which this work belongs. It takes scarcely longer to arrive at the probability that the period is the first rather than the second half of that century; but not so easily answered is the question of the painter's exact affinities. As for his name, we shall have to confess ourselves baffled and acknowledge that we do not know it.

The student to whom this essay is addressed need not have its Trecento Sieneese origin proved to him, for that will be as manifest

to him as to myself. He may, however, welcome discussion of the less obvious questions of close affinity, precise authorship and exact date.

Although certain features of the design recall Duccio and Lorenzo Monaco, in general character it approaches the Lorenzetti. Were the author an exact contemporary of Duccio, he would scarcely anticipate Lorenzo Monaco to the degree that he does in the shepherd. If, on the other hand, he worked as late as the last-named artist, he surely would not cling so close to Duccio as he does in the opening of the cave, the crossing of the Blessed Virgin's wrists, Joseph's action and draping which vividly recall the latter's small Nativity (Fig. 1), now at Berlin but formerly part of his great *Maestà* of 1308-1311. The angels, however, and the cherubim, as well as the Eternal, are so like to the Lorenzetti, as are also the floreated capitals and leafy cornices of the building, that we are tempted to ask what prevents us from attributing this work, which belongs to a period between Duccio and Lorenzo Monaco, to one or the other of the Lorenzetti, the two most formative artists of that intervening period.

We answer that we know no designs by Pietro or Ambrogio Lorenzetti which are at once so placid and so vehement, in which the pose and modeling of a figure are so compact and full of inner substance as in the Madonna here; and furthermore that although the types of the winged presences bear a strong resemblance to those of the Lorenzetti, they yet are not near enough for identity. To all of which it will be replied that this panel might nevertheless have been painted earlier than any of their other known works. The rejoinder requires us to ascertain, if possible, exactly when the Nativity was painted.

It is no easy task that at this point we are called upon to undertake, for as yet the study of Sieneese art has been pursued too short a time, and by too few students, to have done further than the mapping out of the main outlines, and distributing the known materials more or less coherently among the various dominions and districts. A detailed chronology has scarcely been attempted and accurate results are few. In the presence of a painting like the one before us we feel the more baffled as, owing no doubt to some mere accident, this particular subject is so seldom represented among the Sieneese

works that have come down from the first half of the Trecento that obvious terms of comparison are almost wanting.

We must begin with the composition and see whether we can ascertain when it could first have occurred to an artist to represent the Blessed Virgin in the Nativity off her couch and sitting up, as she does in our picture, instead of reclining, as we have her in Duccio and in all the paintings of Giotto and his anonymous assistants.

As, excepting our case, I can recall no representation of the Nativity in Sienese painting between Duccio's dating from no later than 1311, and such works as the small panel in Berlin (No. 1094A) and the fresco at S. Colomba, both due to followers of the Lorenzetti who worked no earlier than the middle of the century, we must look to the neighboring Florence. There, in the Baroncelli Chapel at S. Croce, executed between 1332 and 1338 we find Taddeo Gaddi's fresco wherein the Madonna is off her couch and almost sitting up. Bernardo Daddi, Taddeo's more exquisite and accomplished fellow pupil, treats the subject nearly in a similar way in a dainty and fascinating *predella* of about the same date, which now forms part of the Maciet bequest at Dijon (Fig. 2).

If we bear in mind that toward 1335 Siena was no longer ahead of Florence in invention and enterprise but lagging behind,¹ and if, besides, we take into account the fact that in the Fogg Nativity the Madonna is seated with both knees bent, instead of one only, as in the Florentine works, we shall not be disinclined to assume that our composition, in which she is farther from the stereotyped Byzantine posture of reclining, cannot be of an earlier date.

Now let us see whether more detailed evidence strengthens or dissipates this presumption.

It will be admitted that architectural features as well as household vessels and utensils, and indeed all things that have shape and pattern, such as costumes, stuffs, ornaments, etc., etc., are constantly changing, and that in the Trecento the change was from the simple to the more complicated, from the round to the pointed, from the massive to the slender and from the sober to the more ornate. To find out just when our Nativity must have been designed it should

¹ In that high achievement of Sienese design, Ugolino di Vieri's tabernacle at Orvieto, begun in 1337, the Madonna in the scene of the Nativity is still reclining. Without going the whole length with Adolfo Venturi (*Storia*, IV, p. 940), who would ascribe the invention of the various scenes to Ambrogio Lorenzetti, I agree that they must be due to no backward artist.

suffice to compare it in all these details with other works of established date.¹

But that is not easy, owing to the unfortunate fact already referred to, that the detailed chronology of Sienese painting has as yet scarcely been attempted. I shall not be expected to undertake it here. The discussion would lengthen out beyond all proportion, demanding a volume or volumes and not a paragraph. Nor am I ready to enter upon it, for while I have had the experience that gives me a sense of the period in a master's career to which a given picture belongs, I have not carried my analysis and synthesis far enough, to translate this sense into demonstrable propositions. Too much must not be expected.

Beginning with the architecture, we note at first glance that it is scenic and flimsy as never in Duccio, in his immediate and close follower (probably Segna) who worked at Massa Maritima, or in Simone Martini. Even when their forms are more ornate they look more massive, more compact and more permanent. They never introduced columns as slender and unsubstantial as those we find here, although one might expect to see them among the twisted ones they occasionally employ. To discover the like of ours, we must search the Lorenzetti, and there we find such an abundance that we can afford to cite those only which, being of inscribed or certified date, and thus beyond discussion, afford us just the aid we need in our inquiry.

To take them in chronological order: Ambrogio's panels in the Florence Academy depicting four episodes from the life of Nicholas of Bari, painted soon after 1332, have an architecture as unsubstantial, with columns as slender, as in our picture and with capitals and bases almost identical. The same in his frescoes of "Government" in the Sienese town-hall begun in 1338, and the same again, although more ornate, in his Florence Academy Presentation of the Infant Jesus in the Temple painted about 1342. As close, if not closer to the columns, capitals and bases in our Nativity, are those in Pietro's S. Umiltà altarpiece in the Florence Academy, the inscription whereof, although renewed, is undoubtedly genuine at

¹ It should, however, be observed that in Siena at least the evolution was steady and logical till toward 1350 only. After that—possibly as one of the many consequences of the Black Death—began archaism, eclecticism, and syncretism, and nothing but a surviving simplicity of purpose and fine craftsmanship, and a saving ignorance of chiaroscuro and the oil medium, prevented the disaster that overtook Italian painting in general little more than two centuries later.



Fig. 1. DUCCIO: NATIVITY.
Berlin.



Fig. 2. BERNARDO DADDI: NATIVITY.
Dijon.

least as regards the date, which is 1341. And so, too, with Pietro's Birth of the Virgin of the Sienese Cathedral Museum dated 1342. His last creations—if I mistake not their chronology—the frescoes in the Lower Church at Assisi recounting the Passion, are more florid in architectural forms, and represent a stage beyond the one that the author of our picture shares with him and his brother. On the other hand, none of the examples quoted is quite as intimately parallel as the forms on Ugolino di Vieri's Tabernacle of 1337 at Orvieto. The impression I derive from the study of the architectural forms alone inclines me, therefore, to infer that this last is the latest date that can be assigned to our Nativity.

Among the conspicuous objects in our panel are the ewer and basin for washing the Holy Child. The basin, it will be observed, is polygonal instead of circular, as in Duccio and *all* earlier artists, but it is not yet hexagonal, as in Pietro Lorenzetti's Triptych of 1342, and in the gorgeous enamel of the British Museum which Adolfo Venturi (*Storia*, IV, p. 940) rightly connects with the studio of Ugolino di Vieri. In both instances the shape is further than ours from the round one which prevailed for centuries, and in Pietro the sides of the basin are decorated with Saracenic floral patterns—one of their earliest appearances in Tuscan art. Making due allowance for the relative backwardness of our painter, we need not hesitate to put the polygonal unadorned basin somewhat earlier than the one in Pietro Lorenzetti's Triptych of 1342. And the ewer is much less ornamented, less Oriental, and points to an earlier date. We thus encounter singular agreement with the evidence drawn from the architecture.

Costume, which so frequently offers clues to dates, affords little assistance here. The less reason for neglecting it. The brocade of the dresses, recalling certain Pietro Lorenzettis of the middle period and anticipating Bartolo di Fredi, and the coiffure of the angels can scarcely belong to a period earlier than 1330, while the rich embroidery that edges the Virgin's mantle belongs presumably to a later day, recalling as it does Pietro's Uffizi Madonna of 1340, the Virgin in Simone's Liverpool panel of 1342 and other contemporary works.

The conclusion we may venture to draw from such evidence as we have been able to accumulate thus tends to confirm, if only because it does not cancel, the immediate impression made by the Fogg Nativity of being a work produced between 1330 and 1340.

If we admit that decade as the one to which our Nativity belongs, the possibility that either Pietro or Ambrogio Lorenzetti was its author is excluded. Ambrogio in any event is not to be thought of. As for Pietro, while I could wish that we had a much more secure and detailed chronology of his works, we nevertheless have sufficient acquaintance with his career and style from 1320 on, to know that after that year he could not have designed the Fogg Nativity.

To exhaust possibilities, let us for a moment toy with the idea that Pietro, who could not have painted this panel after 1320, did it before. It is apposite to remark that in the Polyptych at Arezzo of that year all of Pietro's forms are stiffer, harder, tighter and severer than in ours. Note, too, that the columns that occur there, chiefly in the frames, are heavier and sturdier, and if it occurs to you to compare them with those in another Sienese achievement of the same year, Simone's Pisan Polyptych, and you find that they are identical, you may conclude that these were no expression of personal caprice but as much the fashion in 1320 among the framemakers of Siena as a certain tight skirt was in 1912 among dressmakers in Paris.

I suspect that, although the Arezzo panels are the earliest paintings by Pietro of ascertained date, we possess several pictures that are still earlier. It is an inference I draw from the fact that they are stiffer, severer and tighter, and because they are closer to Duccio. I will not dwell on the Ducciesque Madonnas at Castiglione d'Orcia and S. Angelo in Colle because they are ruined and not to our purpose. In Cortona, however, we have a Madonna Enthroned with Angels which affords terms for comparison (Fig. 3).

Nowhere else in Pietro do we see a throne so severely carpentered and angels leaning upon it or touching it in such patent Ducciesque fashion. The strip of embroidery under the Virgin's throat and crossed over her breast is paralleled nowhere else except in the *Maestà* on the figure of Pilate, before whom the Jews are accusing our Lord. The sparse geometric pattern which edges our Lady's mantle is also found only in Sienese paintings of Duccio's most immediate following.¹

¹ Only the simplest geometric patterns with great spaces between them are found on the borders of robes in such Ducciesque works as the Madonna at S. Casciano or the one formerly at the Monistero near Siena and now at Mr. D. F. Platt's, Englewood, N. J. In Duccio himself these patterns are even simpler.



Fig. 3. PIETRO LORENZETTI: MADONNA ENTHRONED.
Cortona.



Fig. 4. "UGOLINO LORENZETTI": DETAIL FROM FOGG MUSEUM NATIVITY.

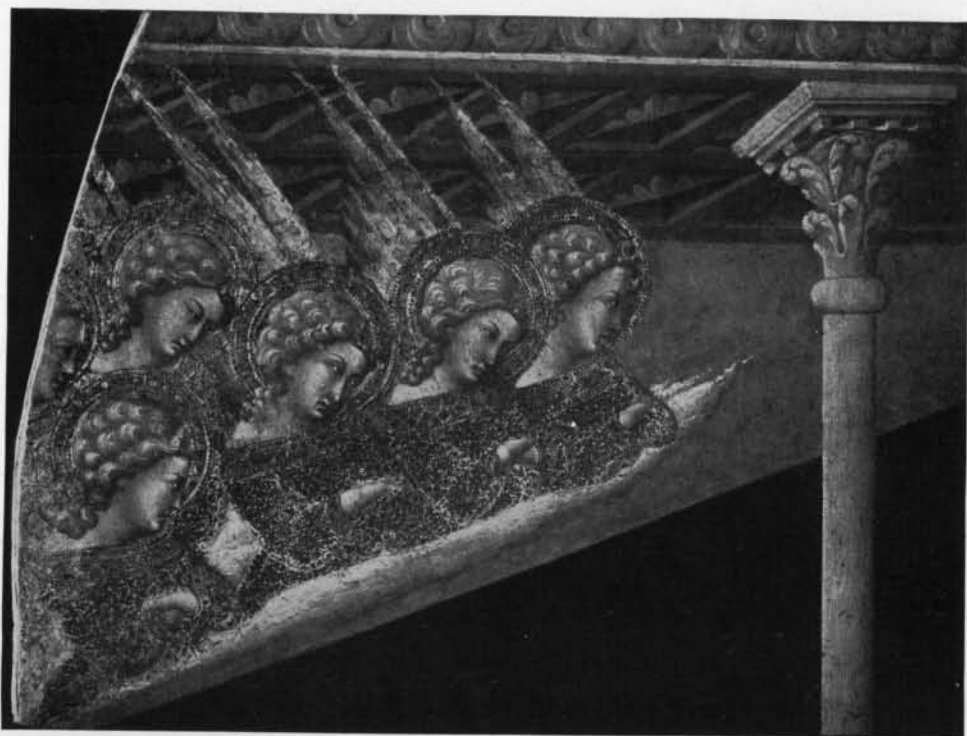


Fig. 5. "UGOLINO LORENZETTI": DETAIL FROM FOGG MUSEUM NATIVITY.

Early in his career though it comes, and to be dated as early as 1315 perhaps, the Cortona Madonna is nevertheless markedly, unmistakably Pietro's. The types, the forms, the action are his: a Child more characteristic, ears more typical, he never painted. If the Fogg Nativity, which, although much less like his other accepted works, was his notwithstanding, we should, to account for the difference, have to put it back some ten years earlier still, to 1305 say, to a period before Duccio's *Maestà*: to make, in short, it contemporary with the incunabula of Sieneſe painting—which is ſimply aſurd.

No element of the Fogg picture is at once more free from ſtiffneſs, archaiſm of any ſort, and more gracious, more ſuave, more lovely, more, in a word, like the moſt advanced Trecento art as practiſed by Barna and Bartolo di Fredi, than the ecſtatic angels with their folded arms, gorgeous robes and wavy, curly hair (Figs. 4, 5). They anticipate the moſt charming fancies of Francesco di Giorgio and Neroccio. It is not without intereſt to compare them with the angels in Pietro's works.

In the Cortona Madonna they ſhow no advance upon Duccio and only a ſlight advance in the Arezzo Polyptych of 1320, or in the angels in the ſpandrils of the equally early Triptych in the Lower Church at Aſſiſi. It is only in works of after 1330, according to my dating, like the Madonna at S. Pietro Ovile, or the one in the Academy at Siena (No. 80, photo. Anderson 21119), or the Uffizi Madonna of 1340, that we find angels of a type and dreſs at all reſembling thoſe in our Nativity. To diſcover their like for feeling and action we muſt go quite to the end of Pietro's career, to the freſco in the Lower Church at Aſſiſi repreſenting the Reſurrection. The neareſt in all reſpects is not to be found in Pietro, however, but in his cloſe follower Niccolò di Ser Sozzi's well-known miniature of the Aſſumption painted in 1334.

I have argued againſt Pietro Lorenzetti's authorſhip of the Cambridge Nativity becauſe it is the moſt likely to be propoſed; but with the ſame method it would be even eaſier to maintain that neither Ambrogio, nor Simone, nor Lippo Memmi come into queſtion. All of which will be more patent when we have made acquaintance, as we ſhall do, with other works by the ſame hand.



"UGOLINO LORENZETTI": PART TWO · BY BERNARD BERENSON

III

TO begin with, I shall submit to the attention of fellow students the few pictures which seem to me to be by the author of the Fogg Museum Nativity; and if at first sight their identity does not seem convincing it is because color—an element so important and helpful in recognition—is absent from the reproductions. Moreover, the eye requires a certain time to perceive even the obvious. After treating this group, I shall attempt to discuss other pictures possibly but less evidently by the same author. The effort cannot be fruitless, for paintings so close to him as to be seriously claimed for him must reveal something significant about his relations to his contemporaries.

It will be convenient to put together three of these certain works because of the close connection between them. They are, first, a Polyptych in the refectory of S. Croce at Florence (No. 8); secondly, another that has disappeared from S. Agostino at S. Gimignano¹; and thirdly, a Triptych of which the center is at Fogliano and the side panels in the Siena Academy (Nos. 42, 43). I trust it may not be hard to persuade the reader that these three works are by the same hand, and after this it will be easier than if we had examined each separately, to prove that that hand was the one which painted the Fogg Museum Nativity.

The S. Croce Polyptych consists of five panels (Fig. 1), each containing under an arch slightly pointed a large, more than half-length figure, with a smaller one in the gable above and in the *predella* below. The Madonna, with her mantle tucked under her right arm, appears in the midst of four Saints among whom we easily make out the Baptist and Francis, but must leave the two gray-beards unnamed. In the Fogliano Triptych (Figs. 3, 3A, 3B), we see the Blessed Virgin, with her mantle tucked under her right arm again, while, as at S. Croce, the half-naked Holy Child, wearing, as so often, a coral charm against the Evil Eye but, as far more rarely perhaps in Siena alone, a cross as well, turns birdlike and rest-

¹ I cannot remember whether I ever saw these panels or whether they had already vanished before my time. They were photographed long ago by Lombardi of Siena (1771, 1772) as of the school of Pietro Lorenzetti and I have always classified them with the S. Croce altarpiece.

less in her arms to the right. In the side panels S. Galgano, like another Mithras, sticks his sword into a rock, and S. Ansano carries the banner, as patron of Siena. All three are more than half length and under trefoil arches with dragons in the spandrils. The now missing S. Gimignano Polyptych (Fig. 2) consisted of five panels, framed as cinquefoils, with a more than half-length figure in each and a smaller one in each gable above. The central figure was the Madonna with the fully clothed Child, holding a large crown with both hands, very heavily seated in her arms. On her right were Dominic and the Baptist, and on the left a young deacon, Laurence or Stephen, and Catherine.

Little demonstration is required to convince the student that these three works are due to the same hand.

To begin with, they partake of the same mood. For designs so Ducciesque as they still are in the main, they are unusually emotional, sentimental and even vehement in expression. The action is agitated, to the extent at least that the severe restraint of the formula permits of action. Of the color I shall not speak because I do not recall what it was at S. Gimignano, and at S. Croce the surface is so spoilt that it scarcely resembles the original state. As design, however, the central panel containing the Madonna and Child in the last-mentioned work is so close to the one in the Fogliano Triptych that it would be insulting the student's intelligence to propose to prove the obvious identity of the mind and hand that created them. The S. Galgano resembles in expression, if not type, the Francis at S. Croce, and he and Ansano as well show a peculiarity in the cut of the hair which we find again on the head of the saint on our extreme left at S. Croce. This peculiarity, of which we may have to speak yet again, consists of a fan-shaped shock which, starting from toward the crown, spreads over the forehead between the waving locks that fall at the sides. Between these two altarpieces and the third, the one formerly at S. Gimignano, the resemblances are not so striking, although convincing enough: between the head of the Child in each; the face of the Madonna there and at S. Croce; between the Francis in the last-named and the Dominic at S. Gimignano; and between the deacon there, and the youthful saints in the gables and *predella* at Florence. Rather than insist on a matter so patent as that these three works are by the same hand, we shall



Fig. 1. "UGOLINO LORENZETTI": MADONNA AND SAINTS. POLYPTYCH.
S. Croce, Florence.



Fig. 2. "UGOLINO LORENZETTI": MADONNA AND SAINTS. POLYPTYCH.
S. Gimignano.

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3A



Fig. 3. "UGOLINO LORENZETTI": MADONNA WITH SS.
GALGANO AND ANSANO. TRIPTYCH.
Fogliano.



3B

do better to turn to the question of their affinities to the rest of Sieneſe painting, and of their chronological relations to each other.

The question of affinities, too, offers no difficulties. Dr. De Nicola, whose ſenſe of Sieneſe art is unſurpaſſed, after reſtructuring the Fogliano Triptych and identifying it as by the hand that painted the S. Croce Polyptych, decided that the latter was manifeſtly by a cloſe follower of Ugolino.¹ The reſemblances are not few, and might be even more ſtriking if we could reſcover the Madonna that formed the centerpiece among the many panels he painted for the altar of S. Croce. The intensity, the vehemence of expreſſion recall him; the knitted brows recall his ſaints; the look of the Child reminds us of his angels; the hands are ſingularly alike, and the way the little fingers diſappear under the others, particularly in the Fogliano Triptych, is an exaggeration of a manneriſm of Ugolino's. The draperies too are modelled after his, more linear than common among the followers of Duccio. And yet it is as eaſy to diſcover affinities with Pietro Lorenzetti, not only of expreſſion ſuch as may have come through Ugolino, who I believe muſt have been influenced by his greater fellow pupil, but in pattern and action as well. The Madonnas at S. Croce and Fogliano, for inſtance, with their poſe off the frontal, their ſidewiſe look, and their mantles tucked under their arms, occur in Sieneſe painting ſo far as I can remember only in Pietro and perhaps Ambrogio Lorenzetti. The Holy Children, too, remind us vividly of theſe maſters, the one in the S. Gimignano altarpiece particularly.

The problem of chronology is far more complicated, but three whole polyptychs ſhould offer ample materials for a ſolution.

We ſhould at the ſtart diſpel from our minds the notion that a pupil of Ugolino's muſt ſomehow have been too old to be ſtrongly influenced by the Lorenzetti. As I have juſt hinted, it is not impoſſible that Ugolino himſelf was affected by them, for although a follower no doubt of Duccio's, there is no reaſon for aſſuming that he was an old man when we loſe ſight of him in 1337; and indeed his maſterpiece, the Madonna of S. Caſciano recently aſſigned to him by Dr. De Nicola, ſeems to have been painted after 1335.

Among the many auxiliary ſtudies required to facilitate the connoiſſeur's reſearches, one of the moſt important ſhould be the ſtudy

¹ *Burlington Magazine*, XXII, p. 147.

of poses in general and of the Madonna's in particular. It probably would be discovered that it was the French, feeling the need of an art less rigid and more human than could be compassed by severe frontality, who had the genius to turn the figure on its own axis so as to bring it into relation with the other figures. That change alone made it possible for the Holy Child to smile at His Mother and for her at times wistfully and at other times joyously to smile back at Him in a way that anticipated, by two hundred years and more, the Milanese Madonnas inspired by Leonardo da Vinci. Giovanni Pisano brought the new pose and the new feeling to Tuscany, but although painting quickly adopted his eager, appealing Child, it took a generation before the Virgin began to turn her whole figure and not her head alone. To represent her standing sideways was an innovation that Tuscan painting in the Trecento did not seem greatly to favor. The Lorenzetti, inspired as nobody else by Giovanni Pisano, could not help trying it, but tried it so seldom that I cannot remember many instances.

Much rarer still is the motive of the Madonna standing sideways with her mantle tucked under the right arm. I can recall none belonging to the public except the Madonna in Ambrogio's Polyptych in the Siena Academy, and only three or four in private collections, as, for example, a full-length one in my own collection, a half-length one in Mr. Charles Loeser's, all dating, be it noted, according to careful calculation from about 1325. One is tempted to infer that the experiment, although so successful as art, did not please—the elders. But meanwhile it was imitated by our painter at S. Croce and at Fogliano, for in both works, as we remember, the Madonna is seen as if standing sideways with her mantle tucked under her right arm. Presumably a motive that did not become popular must have been copied soon after it was introduced, that is to say, soon after 1325, but as other considerations may modify this result we must now turn to them.

We remarked a while ago the fan-shaped shock of hair over the foreheads of Ansano and Galgano in the Fogliano Triptych and of the old saint on our extreme left in the S. Croce altarpiece. The arrangement of the hair is as subject to fashion as dress itself, and for the same reason; it is as easy to cut and curl and dispose as any article of apparel. This particular shock is perhaps vaguely anticipated in Duccio's *Maestas* finished in 1311, and in works by

Simone of no later date than 1320, the great Theophany, for instance, in the town hall of Siena, or the Pisan Polyptych. The closest parallels occur in Uglino, unfortunately undated, in two small works of his in America, a Daniel in the J. G. Johnson Collection (Plate 89 of catalogue) and the head of a graybeard Saint belonging to Mr. Philip Lehman of New York. The next closest occur in Pietro Lorenzetti's signed and dated altarpiece of 1329 at S. Ansano a Dofano.¹ Here, however, the shock begins to be scallop-shaped, and is on the way to the treatment we find in Simone's frescoes at Assisi some six or more years later. As our artist was, in other respects, closely related with both Ugolino and Pietro, he no doubt followed them in this trifle as well; but as his treatment is not so advanced as we found it in a work of 1329, we may safely assume that it goes back two or three years earlier: to the time, therefore, that the pose and action brought us to, that is to say, soon after 1325.

I do not hesitate to say that a study of all the patterns, whether on stuffs or jewels or ornaments, would confirm this date, but as it would be tedious to pursue it here I shall confine myself, before drawing this part of the discussion to a close, to a matter so conspicuous and important as frames.

Frames are to pictures what clothes are to human beings, and it is probable that, in the fourteenth century at least, the framed panel was not prepared by the painter himself but ordered or purchased already made from the framer. Earlier in this article we have already referred to this in connection with works of toward 1320. Directly afterwards, the Gothic pointed frame came in and ousted the round-arched one, although a certain number of the last continued in use for a while, either because they were selling at a discount or that the older people would not change over.

The frame of the Fogliano Madonna, already of a fairly advanced type, has the peculiarity of displaying dragons as ornaments in the spandrils. The same decoration occurs in the spandrils of a Simone Madonna belonging to Mrs. J. L. Gardner of Boston, and of a variant, once upon a time at Brussels, of Segna di Bonaventura's Madonna in the Seminary at Siena. The identity of shape and decoration implies not only the probability that the frames came from the same maker but that they were done at about the same time.

¹ While on the S. Ansano a Dofano altarpiece, it should be noted how much the Child there resembles the one at Fogliano.

Now the chronological arrangement of Simone's works obliges us to date the Gardner Madonna not more than a few years after the Pisa Polyptych of 1320, which brings us to about 1325, and a similar process of research will date the Segnesque Madonna no later.

We thus may venture to place the Fogliano Triptych not long after 1325, and it follows easily that the S. Croce Polyptych is somewhat earlier. Its panels are not cusped and not so pointed; and, despite the singular likenesses between the two Madonnas, the general character of the other figures is much more Ducciesque and closer to Ugolino in the latter than in the former work. As for the third of this group, the S. Gimignano Altarpiece, it is certainly later than either of the others. Its panels approach the cinquefoil rather than the trefoil in the ornamentation of the pointed arches, and I doubt whether such shapes occurred before 1325, while the types approach more closely to the Lorenzetti, and to the Lorenzetti of about 1330 or later. It will suffice here to mention the singular resemblance of the Child with the Children of eager darting look in such Madonnas by the Lorenzetti of about that period as Pietro's at Grosseto (Fig. 4) and Ambrogio's in the Siena Academy (No. 65) and at Roccalbenga¹ (Fig. 5).

It follows from the discussion just completed that the S. Croce, Fogliano, and S. Gimignano series of panels are all by the same hand, that they were painted in the order named within the years 1324-31 or so, and that their author must have begun as a pupil of Ugolino and ended as a follower of the Lorenzetti. Let us now see whether to him is due the Fogg Nativity as well. If it is, we shall have put together four considerable works that imply the existence of a hitherto unidentified artist; while the difference between them, with the permissible insertion of discreet intervals of time, will afford glimpses of a career in its progress, and thus enable us to assemble the nucleus of an artistic personality. Other works which we may agglomerate to this nucleus will enlarge this personality and necessarily modify our sense of its momentum and direction, but in essence it should remain, like character in general, true enough to itself to be recognizable in all its varying phases.

After what we have learned in our examination of the four

¹ Reproduced here chiefly because of its interest as an entirely unknown picture by this great master.



Fig. 4. PIETRO LORENZETTI: MADONNA.



Fig. 5. AMBROGIO LORENZETTI: MADONNA.
Roccalbenga.

works in question, namely the three series of panels and the Nativity, we shall not find it hard to persuade ourselves that all are by the same hand. For proofs we naturally shall look first at the work closest in date to the last mentioned, and as, apart from considerations of authorship, we have concluded that the Fogg picture must have been designed somewhere about 1335, and the S. Gimignano Polyp-tych as late perhaps as 1331, it is to this polyptych that we shall turn first. We find that the Madonnas have faces which resemble each other singularly, the heads of the Children likewise, and that the startled, eager, dramatic shepherd in the one is of the closest kin to the Dominic and Baptist in the other. In the droop even more than in the shape of the Blessed Virgin's hands in each we observe a similar likeness, and the mussel-like ear of the shepherd is all but identical with Dominic's. Looking at the S. Croce Polyp-tych, we discover that the saint seen on our extreme left, in type, features, peculiarities of hair-dressing (the fan-shaped shock over the forehead), folds of drapery and hand, is almost a line for line study for the Joseph in the Nativity. In the Fogliano Triptych what strikes us chiefly is the same color scheme of golden brown that we have in the Fogg picture.

It may be assumed that the trained student who has had the patience and humility to follow the evidence will find it more than adequate to the purpose of proving that the last-named work, the Nativity, is due to the mind and hand responsible for the other works. Their relations to each other have already been established, and we now may conclude without rashness that this hand, first guided by Ugolino, as we see in the S. Croce Polyptych, leaned more and more toward the Lorenzetti, as we note progressively in the three other works. If any doubt lingers in our minds it will be dispelled by the examination of two or three paintings more that are certainly by the same hand, besides one or two less certain ones that claim attention before we can sum up our knowledge and give our present impression of the author of the Cambridge Nativity.

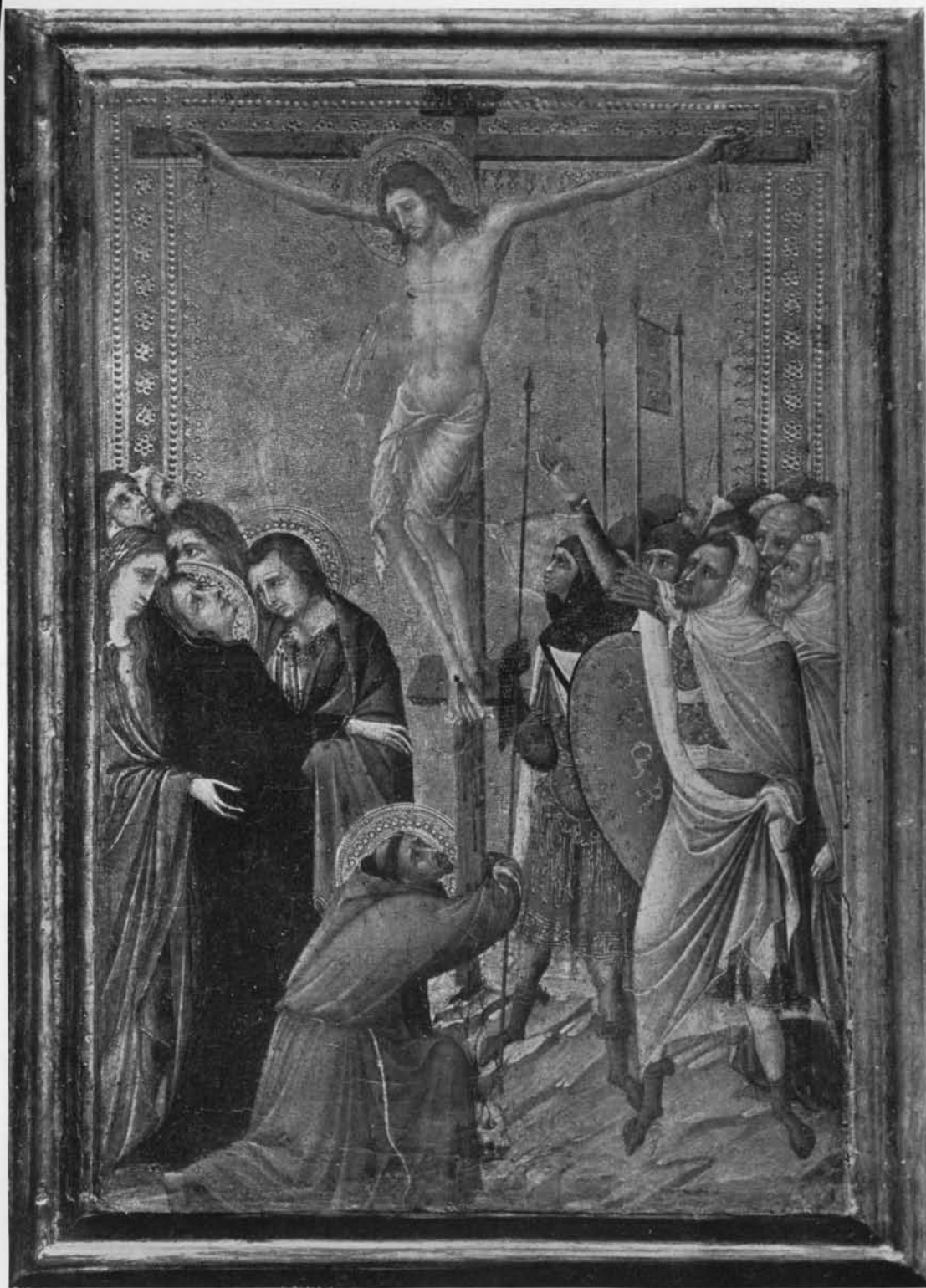
Two of the pictures that seem to me to be beyond question by our author represent the same subject, the Crucifixion. One is an upright panel in my collection¹ and the other is an oblong panel,

¹ The dealer of whom I bought it years ago said that it came from Lugano, where there remained a companion to it.

probably part of a *predella*, in the Louvre. In the upright one (Fig. 6) the treatment remains Ducciesque, with episodes culled, as it were, from the sublime Crucifixion in the *Maestas*. Our master betrays himself first in the warmth, brilliance and radiance of the color, surpassing in this respect no doubt only because of its better preservation, all his other works, and then in the types, in the astonished expression, in the prominence given to the whites of the eyes, and in the way the draperies have of stretching for no reason into angularity or flatness. It is a design he must have executed between the S. Croce Polyptych and the Fogliano Triptych.¹ The oblong Crucifixion in the Louvre (No. 1665) is more original in conception (Fig. 7). Its division into distinct groups, its horsemen with their carefully studied cuirasses, mail and helmets, its touch, as it were, of deliberate Byzantinism, its curious corroded coloring, used to suggest to me an archaizing painter, and make me wonder whether he might not be Giovanni di Paolo. It is clear now that it was painted by the author of the Fogg Nativity, in a moment not long after the S. Gimignano Polyptych. Look carefully at the types, the draperies, the knitted brows, the eyes, the ears, and you will end by agreeing. The Christ on the cross is, by the way, nearly identical with the Eternal in the Nativity.

If these two panels just described hover between Duccio and Pietro Lorenzetti, the work that we turn to next is so close to the last-named master that when I first saw it I supposed it to be by him. At that time it belonged to Mr. C. B. Perkins, the heir of the famous writer on Tuscan sculpture, C. C. Perkins of Boston, but it now forms part of Mrs. Gardner's collection (Fig. 9). Its shape is almost unique at Siena, for it is a small arched Tabernacle and decorated, like many a wayside shrine all over Italy, with paintings on the back as well as in the embrasure. We see the Blessed Virgin seated sideways on a wide shallow throne, while the Child in her arms plays with a bird, fiercely and cruelly—in the character given Him in the Gospels of the Infancy—while to right and left and above are ranged Cherubim and Angels, Peter and Paul, Catherine and the Magdalen, and in the embrasure the Baptist and Evangelist, Nicholas, and Anthony Abbot.

¹ Among the Ducciesque Crucifixions two stand very close to this one, the one possibly by our author himself, known to me in reproduction only, belonging to Prince A. Gagarine (see *Les Anciennes Ecoles de Peinture dans les Palais et Collections privés russes*, Bruxelles, Van Oest, 1910), and the other in the gallery of the New York Historical Association (No. 189), very likely by an imitator of our master.



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Fig. 6. "UGOLINO LORENZETTI": CRUCIFIXION.
Collection of Mr. Bernard Berenson, Settignano.

Not only is this portable shrine close to Pietro Lorenzetti, but close to him at a definite moment, represented by three Madonnas which were painted, as I have good reason to believe, between about 1330 and 1335. One of these, at Grosseto (Fig. 4), we have mentioned already because of the striking resemblance between the Child there and the Infant in the S. Gimignano Polyptych. More striking still is the resemblance to the Child in Mrs. Gardner's Tabernacle, although nearest of all to the fierceness of the latter Child's action is the one in the second of these Madonnas, a panel in S. Pietro Ostile at Siena. The third is in the Siena Academy (No. 80). All three Virgins sit on elaborately draped thrones, and have so much in common with the types and mannerisms of our painter that it took me no slight effort to distinguish between them and his real works. The resemblance, to take but one instance, between the Madonna and Child in the Siena Academy and those in the S. Gimignano altarpiece seems created for the confusion of connoisseurs.

And yet the author of the Fogg Nativity betrays himself in many ways. In the first place, the Tabernacle has the general character that by this time we have learned to recognize at sight, the "all-overishness" that the great psychologist William James used to speak of, which determines our decisions more than all the detailed analysis that can be brought up in proof. Condescending, nevertheless, to facts, we may point to the types of the old men glowing with prophetic passion, to the astonished looks, and prominent whites of the eyes, to the same shape of hands and the same kind of folds which have all become familiar to us as we studied our artist's other works. An expression so like to that of the shepherd in the Fogg Nativity as the Baptist's in Mrs. Gardner's Tabernacle, a Paul in the last-named so like the one in the gable above the Baptist at S. Croce, old saints so like the ones there and here, a cast of drapery so identical as Peter's in our Tabernacle and the Evangelist's in the Louvre Crucifixion, a hand so like our Madonna's and that of Our Lady at S. Gimignano or the S. Ansano in the Fogliano Triptych, bear strong corroborating witness to the conclusion that all are due to the same brain and habits. Chronologically, too, it fits perfectly into the canon. We have seen that in so far as it depends upon Lorenzetti's paintings, which our artist was imitating just then, these dated from after 1330, and that its next of kin among works by the

same hand was the S. Gimignano Polyptych, which we have placed about 1331. In the canon, therefore, it finds room after the last-named achievement and before the Fogg Nativity, which, as we shall recall, we decided to date about 1335.

To these works that I think I am justified in ascribing to the same artist I shall now add two more. The first, consisting of four panels in the Pisa Gallery with a full-length figure in each (Fig. 8), the stray remains of some scattered polyptych, I should accept as his without hesitation if I did not find them a trifle summary and coarse in execution. The fault may be due to a certain carelessness, or because their position on the polyptych demanded a larger treatment, or merely to the present darkened and corroded condition of the surface, or to all these causes in combination. I cannot admit, however, that their design at least was due to anyone else, and much if not all of the execution. The types are his, with the crimped hair, and whites of the eyes showing so prominently. The hands are his, Lucy's, for instance, like S. Ansano's in the Fogliano Triptych, and Catherine's like those in Mrs. Gardner's Tabernacle: the draperies are his, too, as is so manifest in the Bartholomew, with whom we need only parallel the Baptist in the Louvre Crucifixion and the Peter in the Tabernacle. Finally, the Catherine is all but identical with the same saint in the S. Gimignano Polyptych.

Perhaps it is only the timidity of age that makes me hesitate at all in annexing to our group the pair of shutters with ten rather fluently sketched and charmingly colored little figures in the J. G. Johnson Collection (Fig. 10). There scarcely can exist a more serious reason for reluctance to accept them, for not only are they worthy of the others by our artist but most intimately related to them. The figure of Bartholomew, for instance, is all but the same saint as at Pisa, and Lucy all but identical with the one there again, the young Deacon and Gabriel are close to those in the S. Gimignano Polyptych, and the Andrew resembles the old Evangelist in Mrs. Gardner's Tabernacle. Finally, the same Andrew's folds, and those of Bartholomew and Gabriel as well, have all the peculiarities of misplaced flatness and tightness that we have seen so frequently in the other works by the author of the Fogg Nativity. I venture to conclude that there is small excuse for doubting that these little figures, too, must be by him. Again, we are encouraged by the facility wherewith one may insert them in the canon. They find their

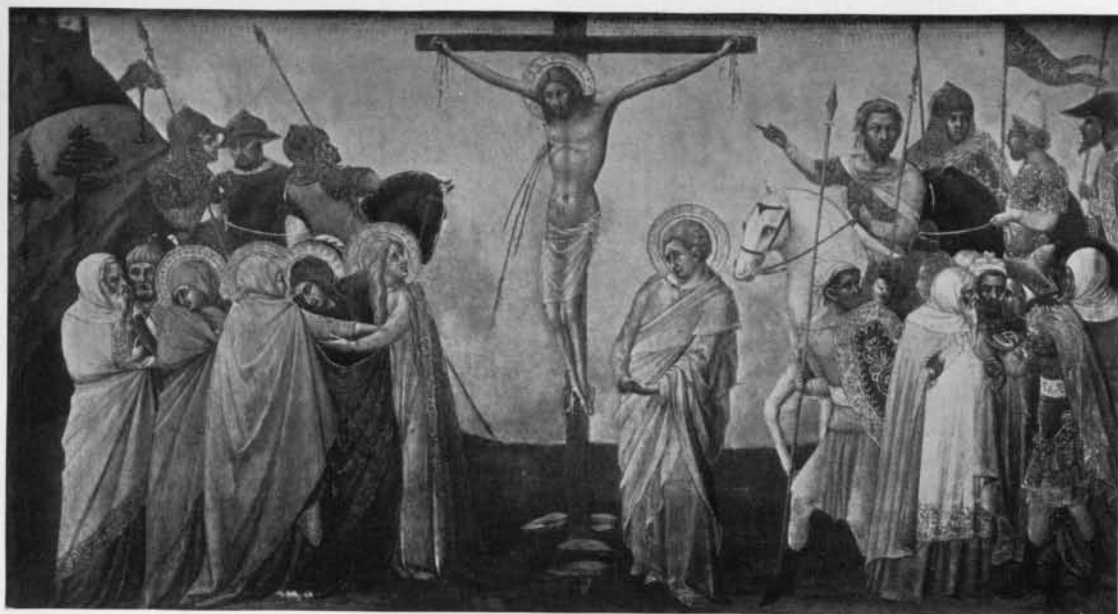


Fig. 7. "UGOLINO LORENZETTI": CRUCIFIXION.
Louvre, Paris.



Fig. 8. "UGOLINO LORENZETTI": FOUR SAINTS.
Pisa.



Fig. 9. "UGOLINO LORENZETTI": MADONNA AND SAINTS. TABERNACLE.
Collection of Mrs. John Lowell Gardner, Boston.

natural place between the Pisa figures and the Nativity, between 1331 or so and 1335, let us say.¹

IV

More works by the same hand will appear in time, as soon perhaps as other students can bring their contributions to the subject. Meanwhile we have enough already, stretching, as we have seen, over a period of ten years, to form the nucleus, we may even go so far as to say the torso, of an artistic personality.

It is an agreeable and attractive one. There is something at once fresh and youthful, passionate and ardent in his figures, emotion in a word. If he never abandons himself to such tortured agonies of almost grotesque grief as the Lorenzetti sometimes exhibit (Pietro, for instance, at Assisi), he attains a certain airiness, a gayety almost, that radiates conspicuously from his S. Croce and Fogliano and Johnson panels. And yet he is scarcely the inferior of these great masters in his gifts of eloquence and dramatic arrangement, as we have seen in his Crucifixions, the Louvre one particularly, and in the Nativity. And much as he leans on them, he is no slavish imitator. On the contrary, in the last-named panel, his most considerable achievement, he displays as much independence of them as kinship with them. The more I meditate on this, his maturest work, the more do I become aware therein of a serenity, a ponderation of thought, and a command of artistic resources which give its creator a distinct and honorable place among his Sieneese contemporaries. We shall recall wondering what could have inspired a composition in many respects so singular. We need no longer hesitate to conclude that, no matter what theologian or poet set his task for him, the painter who could make a composition so original was no ordinary artist. It is not likely that among his fellows we shall end by putting him on a level with Simone or the Lorenzetti, but he may turn out ultimately to have, when all is considered, the merit

¹ As I wrote of these shutters some seven years ago without foreseeing the present study, it may be of some interest to read what I said then:

"These are among the most spirited, brilliant and attractive creations of the Sieneese School. One is at a loss as to their exact authorship. They do not perfectly coincide with any unquestioned work of Pietro's, being more radiantly clear and golden in color and of a blither spirit. Nevertheless they are too close to him in every way to be by anyone but a very near follower, and among these there is none who attains to a quality so worthy of the master himself. It is thus better to assume that they are by him until more precise acquaintance with Sieneese art proves or disproves the attribution."

See my catalogue of the Italian Masters in the J. G. Johnson Collection, p. 35.

and rank of a Lippo Memmi. If he scarcely attains this artist's almost uniform loveliness of features and daintiness of workmanship, he is more poignant, more absorbing, more personal. As a colorist also he is distinctly apart. In his better preserved panels the gamut reminds me at times of the East¹ with its unhackneyed transitions and unexpected intensities. He almost harks back to the most wonderful of all Italian Medieval masters of tones and pigment and technique, the unknown Sienese of a generation or two before Duccio who painted an altarpiece to the glory of the Baptist now in the Siena Academy (No. 14). And withal he seems to have had an enterprising and experimental mind, as we may infer from the fact that each of his remaining works is distinct from the others.

This last quality may, however, be accounted for in yet another and not less probable way if we suppose that these works represent not a whole career, but only the initial, necessarily tentative part of one. As we have seen, it seems to start out toward 1327 with the S. Croce Polyptych and to end some ten or more years later with the Fogg Nativity, for none of these paintings—and they are the only ones known at present—is very likely to be of later date. What became of him then, at the height of his maturity? If facts warranted, it would be delightful to establish that we have here the youth of an artist hitherto known to us only in full career. But at first appearance this pupil of Ugolino is already under the influence of Pietro Lorenzetti, and in each of the several works that we have examined this dependence increases, until finally, as in Mrs. Gardner's Tabernacle and the J. G. Johnson panels, he is scarcely to be distinguished from his leader. True, the Nativity, his latest achievement, is more severed, more emancipated from the Lorenzetti, as if its author were suddenly reaching out to a serener and more severely plastic art; but what career known to us only in its maturity could it possibly have preceded?

I can think of two only that could come under consideration, Barna's, and Lippo Vanni's.

Now Barna, "the most tragic minded" of Sienese as he has been called, is an artist whom it is easy enough to estimate but very difficult to place, for the traditions with regard to him are confusing, and documents concerning him offer no security. We thus are left

¹In the Louvre Crucifixion one of the horsemen wears Persian headgear. As is manifest in Pietro Lorenzetti's frescoes at S. Francesco in Siena, at about this time the arts and crafts of the contemporary Orient were beginning to invade Italy.

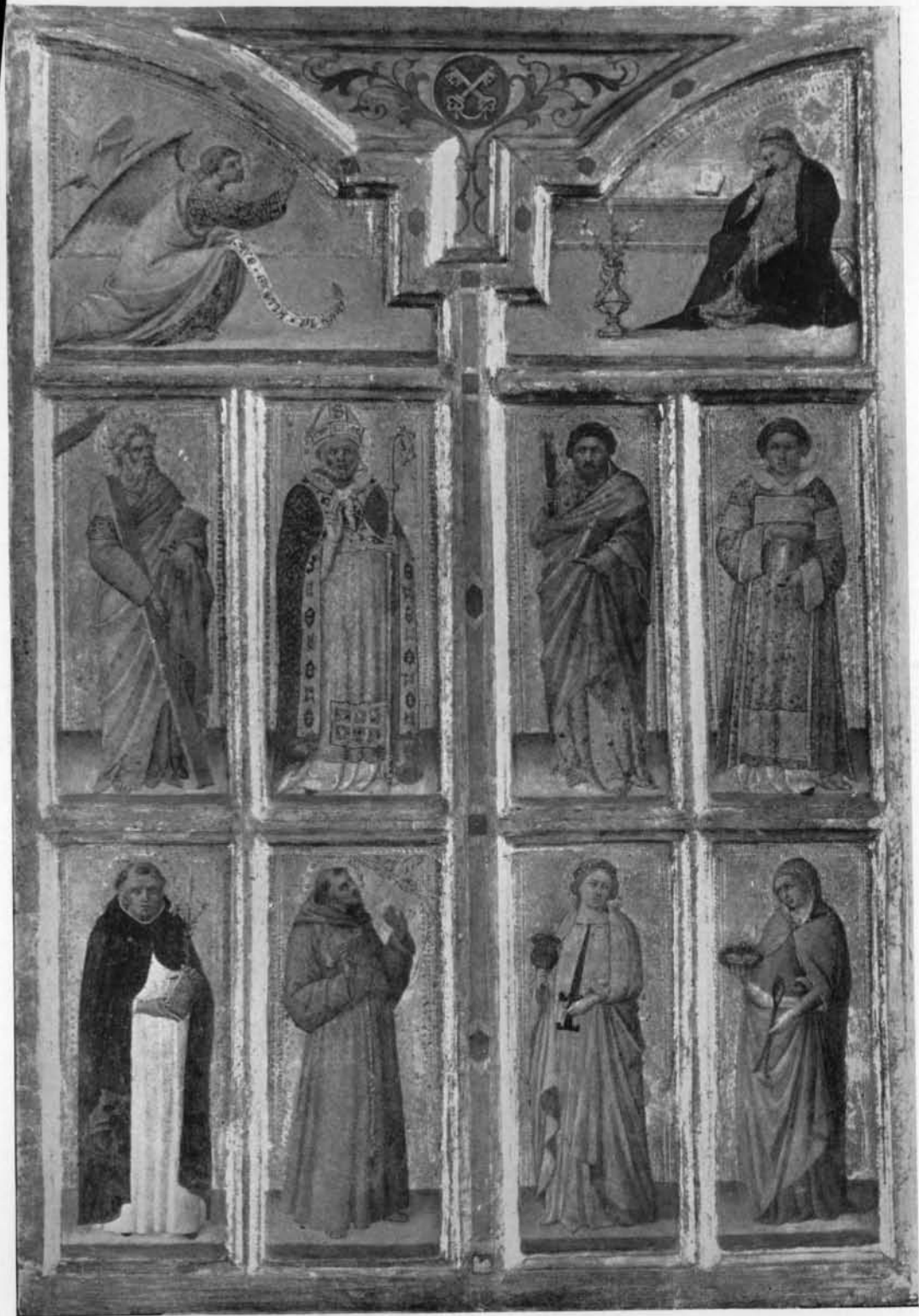


Fig. 10. "UGOLINO LORENZETTI": ANNUNCIATION AND SAINTS.
Collection of the late John G. Johnson, Philadelphia.



to our own resources, which consist of the inferences we may draw from the frescoes at S. Gimignano. These reveal an artist who no doubt owed not a little to the passion and intensity of the Lorenzetti, but who yet remained faithful to the types, coloring and even compositions of Simone and his school. And as he seems, in turn, to have been the chief inspiration of Bartolo di Fredi and Andrea Vanni, we can perhaps conclude that his brief flowering season occurred not long after but scarcely before 1350. Not only do I fail to discover in the works by our painter, which as we remember are of overwhelmingly Lorenzettish character, anything in their style, their types, or their coloring compelling us to regard them as a preparation for the frescoes at S. Gimignano, but their date excludes the likelihood; for the author of the Fogg Nativity had a career of at least ten years behind him when he painted that panel about 1335; and fifteen years later, the earliest probable date of Barna's designs, he would have been a man toward fifty, and not the young man traditionally credited with that great achievement. And besides, what became of him in the intervening years? It would be a singular, I may add an almost unparalleled accident that swept away every trace of the activity of those earlier middle years usually so productive.

If Barna is excluded, despite the uncertainty surrounding his place in Sienese art, we shall find it no harder to eliminate Lippo Vanni. Dr. De Nicola's researches have given definite substance to this artist, hitherto a mere name, and to the hearsay reputation hitherto enjoyed by him we may now add several works that we can know and appreciate at first hand. It turns out that he must have been a painter of about the measure of the author of the Fogg Nativity. They even have one or two points of contact. Thus, the Francis in Lippo's fresco at S. Francesco of Siena is so like the one in our author's panels of the Johnson Collection that they doubtless must have a common origin in some figure by one of the Lorenzetti; and in the same way and for a similar reason, the dead Christ under the S. Croce Madonna is like the one under Lippo's Triptych at SS. Sisto e Domenico in Rome. Lippo's dates, too, which, unlike Barna's, are well known, would fit better with our author's. Nevertheless, two strong objections oppose our linking together the two groups of works into one career. In the first place, although Lippo

was active at least as early as 1344, it is most improbable that he had already had, as would be the case with our painter, a career of twenty years behind him. There would arise the question what became of him in the the decade that intervened between the execution of the Fogg Nativity and the miniatures of 1345 assigned to him by Dr. De Nicola. More negative still are the conclusions drawn from the fact that while Lippo Vanni, like all his contemporaries, owed a great deal to the Lorenzetti, he even more than Barna follows the stream of Simone, and is at times (as in a Madonna once at a Roman dealer's, and in the St. Paul in the Bartolini-Salimbeni-Vivai Collection at Florence) scarcely to be distinguished from Lippo Memmi.

It is hardly necessary to add that Luca di Tomè and Jacopo di MIMO cannot be thought of in this connection, although I mention them to say that I have considered and refused their claims. The truth seems to be that the career which we have studied ended with the Fogg Nativity. To painters, as to other mortals, death comes sometimes sooner than later, and in all probability it snatched ours away in his prime. He did not perish utterly. In Bartolo di Fredi's and Taddeo di Bartolo's angels we seem to feel a reminiscence of his art.

By what name shall we call him? My preference goes toward a nomenclature which has the advantage of being at the same time descriptive, mnemonic, and alive, in place of the abstract shadows of abstractions, evoking nothing real, affected by that most German of centuries, the nineteenth, with its "Masters of the Half Figures," "Masters of the Pink Sash," "Masters of the Faces with Two Eyes," or Masters of many-linked place names. Our author was, as we have seen, an artist who started as the pupil of Ugolino and ended as the follower of Lorenzetti. I propose, therefore, to designate him, until archives one day yield up the secret of how his contemporaries called him, by the names of his two teachers, "Ugolino Lorenzetti." But if that name irritates those who did not like my "Amico di Sandro" and "Alunno di Domenico," they are free to speak of him as the "Master of the Fogg Art Museum Harvard University Cambridge Massachusetts United States of America Nativity." I shall carry my patience so far as to allow them to put hyphens between these words and even to run them all into one.