

# THE ALANA COLLECTION

## ITALIAN PAINTINGS AND SCULPTURES FROM THE FOURTEENTH TO SIXTEENTH CENTURY

EDITED BY MIKLÓS BOSKOVITS



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Centro Di

NICOLÒ PIZOLO

Padua c.1420-1453

Nicknamed *Pizolo* (meaning tiny in Paduan dialect), Nicolò di Pietro was born in Villaganzerla, son of a town crier of Padua. He became one of the leading protagonists of Renaissance art in that city, both as painter and sculptor. Documents mention him for the first time in 1438 when, at the age of roughly eighteen, he was arrested for nocturnal affrays and possession of arms.<sup>1</sup> In 1440 he is recorded as a painter. His profession can be deduced both from his election as *gastaldo* of the guild of Paduan painters in 1444, and from the report that in 1448 a painter called Luca di Puglia asked him to learn from him how to paint "*in recenti*". Many of his documented works, even if lost, attest to his mastery of various techniques (including fresco) and his employment in important commissions.<sup>2</sup> In 1447, though qualified as a painter, Nicolò was reported as an assistant of Donatello in the sculptural decoration of the Altar in the Basilica del Santo in Padua.<sup>3</sup> But the identification of Pizolo's hand in any specific figures of the bronze altar remains problematic.<sup>4</sup> That he apparently worked for Donatello can be deduced from the fact that in November 1454 the Florentine master asked the heirs of Pizolo, who had died as the result of a violent affray in the previous year, for the return of some bronze panels in which he had already intervened.

In these same years Pizolo entered into another important professional relationship, this time with the younger Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506), together with whom he began to fresco the Ovetari chapel in the Eremitani at Padua. Its decoration had been entrusted to two pairs of artists: Pizolo and Mantegna on the one hand, Giovanni d'Alemagna and Antonio Vivarini on the other.<sup>5</sup> Both partnerships, however, were doomed from the start: due to the quarrels that erupted between Pizolo and Mantegna in the one case, and due to the death of Giovanni d'Alemagna and the defection of Antonio Vivarini in the other. On Pizolo's death in 1453, the work he had initially been commissioned to execute had not been completed. The state of the frescoes he completed in the Ovetari chapel during this period is known, however, thanks to the overall assessment of progress of the work conducted by Francesco Squarcione and Giovanni Storlato in 1454: from this document it can be inferred that Pizolo had completed the *Blessing God the Father* in the central web of the apsidal vault, the right portion of the intrados, and the *Doctors of the Church* in the spandrels.

The final blow came in March 1944 when an air bombardment caused the collapse of the chapel. Much of the fresco decoration was lost: the cycle can be evaluated today through some frescoes that had previously been detached from the walls and the recent problematic reassembly and reinstallation in the chapel of some other of the narrative scenes.<sup>6</sup> As far as Pizolo is concerned, a fragmentary *Seraph* is preserved. Of particular importance is the altarpiece in bronzed terracotta, which was recovered in mutilated form from the rubble. Claimed as an autograph work of Nicolò, its autograph status is made problematic by the intervention of his assistant Giovanni da Pisa. Given the destruction of much of the chapel, the photographic campaign of the frescoes of the Ovetari chapel conducted in the late nineteenth century and shortly before the Second World War thus assumes fundamental importance for the evaluation of Pizolo's work.<sup>7</sup>

The problem of the exchange between Pizolo and the younger Mantegna in this enterprise has been hotly debated: there are those who have emphasized the former's stimulative role; others have played down its scale and importance.<sup>8</sup> The same goes for the altarpiece for the same chapel: a leading role has been assigned by some to Mantegna rather than to Pizolo in its design and modeling; others have recognized Giovanni da Pisa's contribution as fundamental. Judgments of this work have been equally diverse: it may be considered either as a precocious and intelligent interpretation of Donatello's Altare del Santo, or as a misconception of it.

As for the sources, Scardeone and later Vasari specify the participation of Pizolo in the famous workshop run by Squarcione in Padua. The former source described Pizolo as "colleague and competitor" of Mantegna in the Ovetari chapel. Vasari emphasized, in turn, the distinction of Pizolo's frescoes in the chapel, and the fact that they confirmed the fame of the prematurely deceased artist in his hometown.<sup>9</sup>

## 31. Madonna and Child

c.1445-1449

Transferred from panel to multiplex support, 59.5 x 45.7 cm.

*Provenance:* Berlin, Richard von Kaufmann (1850-1908), from 1889 to 1908 and his heirs, from 1908 to December 1917; Amsterdam, Jacques Goudstikker (1897-1940), from 1917 to 1940; expropriated by the Nazis, from 1940 to 1945; The Hague, Dienst Verspreide Rijkscollecties (inv. NK 1924), on loan to the Institute for the History of Art at Groningen, from 1945 to at least 1978; Maastricht, Bonnefantenmuseum (inv. 3404), until February 2006; put on sale by the Goudstikker heirs; New York, Christie's, 19 April 2007; acquired there for the Alana Collection.

*Exhibitions:* Amsterdam 1919, no. 69; Amsterdam 1934, no. 330; Paris 2008b, no. 1.

The Madonna presents the Child sitting on a cushion placed on a broad balustrade of pink marble; its molded face in the foreground reveals two inlays in porphyry, symbol of regality. The trees of a *hortus conclusus*, a conventional Marian symbol, are arranged in a continuous row in the lower background. The upper part of the ground is gold leaf decorated with punched motifs that form lozenges including an eight-petal flower. The same floral motif recurs in the halos. The Virgin's head is covered by a veil, threaded round the crown of the head to form a kind of bonnet with a frilled top. Her mantle presents in its lining the motif of a golden lily, another Marian symbol; its hem is decorated with a gold border enriched with a punched tendrill motif and punctuated with golden dots. With her left hand Mary holds in place a transparent veil spread out on the balustrade in front. The Christ Child is wrapped in a yellow drape over a transparent chemise. He raises his index and middle fingers to his mouth and lifts his right hand, palm exposed to the viewer, in a gesture either of surprise or as if to ward off something. The Virgin looks away to the right. The painting was clearly intended as a self-sufficient image, destined for private devotion.

The painted surface has been transferred from its original panel to a synthetic support, but this has not damaged its margins. In the upper part the multifoil arched profile of the frame, now lost, forms a kind of characteristic meander round the gold ground. Previous cleanings have slightly abraded the paint surface; this has made more visible the wide-meshed craquelure

and especially the *pentimento* that profiles the Child's left leg. Small retouches are visible along the margins and in some points of the flesh parts, especially on the right side of the Virgin's face and in the cushion. The gold ground has also been integrated, especially along the margins. On the whole, however, for a painting of its age, it is in fine condition.

The Alana *Madonna*, in composition and form, immediately invites comparison with the similar *Virgin and Child* in the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore (inv. no. 37.519; fig. 1), which coincides both in its measurements and in its composition.<sup>1</sup> The Walters version presents, however, a number of variants: especially in the modeling of the draperies of the garments and in the treatment of the parapet in front, on which a plum is represented.<sup>2</sup> The gold ground consists, in this case, of gold leaf, decorated with racemes; and the punched motifs that adorn the halos differ, too, from those in the Alana panel. Apart from the coincidences and variants between the Alana and Baltimore *Madonnas*, a further aspect should be emphasized: namely, the fact that infrared reflectography of the painting being discussed here has ascertained the tell-tale signs of pouncing and hence (in spite of the *pentimenti*) the use of a cartoon.<sup>3</sup> So the evaluation of the painting requires a parallel examination of the two panels. The use of a cartoon also poses the question whether it was used by the same master who made the drawing, or whether he might have lent it to one of his pupils.

Both versions, apart from this common use of a cartoon, long shared an attribution to the same Dalmatian master, Juraj Čulinović, called Giorgio Schiavone (Scadrin, born between 1433 and 1436 - d.1504), who was trained in the famous workshop of Francesco Squarcione in Padua, as proven by a contract dated 1456.<sup>4</sup> The attribution to Schiavone was first proposed for the Alana *Madonna* by F. Harck in 1889, when it entered the Berlin collection of Richard von Kaufmann.<sup>5</sup> It was then confirmed both by Berenson and by Adolfo Venturi. It was repeated also in the sale catalogue of the auction at Cassirer-Helbing in Berlin in 1917.<sup>6</sup> At this sale the

painting was purchased by Jacques Goudstikker, a well-known art dealer in Amsterdam, who lent it to the exhibition held in Amsterdam in 1919-1920, and the exhibition of Italian art held in the same city in 1934.<sup>7</sup> The attribution to Schiavone was repeated at these exhibitions and endorsed by van Marle.<sup>8</sup> The Baltimore version, too, had been catalogued as a work of Schiavone ever since 1922, and listed as such by Berenson since 1932.<sup>9</sup> A solution to the pairing of the two versions of the composition was proposed by Fiocco in 1936: namely, their common derivation from a lost model of Filippo Lippi. Already in 1927 he had taken into consideration at least the picture being discussed here as a "caricature of Lippi", i.e. a corrupt transcription of a prototype painted by Lippi during his period of activity in Padua in the earlier 1430s. Fiocco's hypothesis that the Walters and Alana *Madonnas* derive from a putative model produced by Fra Filippo in Padua, now lost, became widely accepted, though sometimes with reservations.<sup>10</sup>

So, the attribution of the Alana *Madonna* to the Dalmatian master was widely shared, or re-stated, and discussion of the two paintings was long placed in the problematic context of Schiavone's development. It was not until Federico Zeri's analysis of the Baltimore version in 1976 that this position was critically re-assessed and a new attribution proposed.<sup>11</sup> Zeri confirmed the use of the same cartoon in both paintings and re-stated Fiocco's hypothesis that it probably translated a work left in Padua by Filippo Lippi. Yet it was just the Lippesque features of the painting, combined with those of design and color, that, in Zeri's mind, excluded an attribution to Schiavone, in particular when compared with an authenticated work of the Dalmatian master in the same Walters Collection, the *Madonna and Child with two music-making angels* (inv. no. 37.1026). Zeri therefore prudently assigned both paintings to the "School of Padua", with a precocious dating to the late 1430s or to the following decade. On the other hand, he established an explicit reference to the De Lazara polyptych, a documented work of Squarcione (1449-1452), now in the Museo Civico in Padua. In any case, the assign-

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The surviving documentation can be found in Lazzarini, Moschetti 1908, pp. 69-77; Rigoni 1948; Sartori 1976, pp. 87-90, 424-425, 431. Pizolo's violent nature was to blight his whole life and was underlined by Vasari who said (in his *vita* of Mantegna) that if he (Pizolo) "had taken as much delight in painting as he did in arms, he would have become excellent, and might perchance have lived longer".
- <sup>2</sup> The artist is reported to have frescoed his own house in *terra verde*; the report cannot but remind us of Paolo Uccello's (lost) monochrome frescoes with the cycle of *Giants* painted in the entrance to the Palazzo Vitaliani in Padua in 1430-32, Michiel [1521-1543], ed. 1884, p. 66. Cf. Pope-Hennessy 1950, p. 173.
- <sup>3</sup> White 1969; Sartori 1983-1989, I, pp. 213-231; White 1984. In 1449 Nicolò was paid for painting the wooden cross on which Donatello's bronze *Crucifix* for the chancel of the Basilica del Santo was to be hung. See Johnson 1997.
- <sup>4</sup> For these attempts to identify his hand, see Pope-Hennessy 1993, who thought that Pizolo assisted in the design of the reliefs. See also Rosenauer 1993; Gentilini 1994; *idem*, 1999.
- <sup>5</sup> Lightbown, 1986, pp. 387-396; De Nicolò Salmazo, 1993, pp. 31-86.
- <sup>6</sup> On the recovery of the fragments, see Cozzi 1989, pp. 198-200, nos. 58.1-59.14; *Andrea Mantegna* 2006.
- <sup>7</sup> Majoli 2006, pp. 73-80.
- <sup>8</sup> Pizolo's subordinate role in relation to Mantegna, and a negative judgment of his involvement, was underlined by Longhi 1927a. Fiocco 1927, by contrast, spoke positively of Pizolo's contribution; his view was followed by Mariani Canova 1984. Lucco 1985a, p. 123 note 18, has depreciated his role.
- <sup>9</sup> Scardeone 1560, pp. 370-371; Vasari 1568 [ed. 1878-1885], III, p. 388.

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Scardeone 1560  
Lazzarini, Moschetti 1908  
Rigoni 1948  
Sartori 1976, pp. 87-90, 424-425, 431



Fig. 1. Nicolò Pizolo, *Madonna and Child*. Baltimore (Md.), The Walters Art Museum.





Fig. 2. Squarcione, *Madonna and Child*. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Gemäldegalerie.

ment of what is now the Alana version to the circle of Squarcione was, in the aftermath of Zeri's analysis, favored by several scholars.<sup>12</sup>

Another turning point came in 1977 when Miklós Boskovits proposed for the first time the attribution of both panels to Nicolò Pizolo.<sup>13</sup> He analyzed Pizolo's style, as it can be judged from the frescoes in the Ovetari chapel, and compared it with that

of Squarcione under whom he is said to have been trained. From his master he derived, says Boskovits, the "harsh, almost ironic characterization" of the figures, as well as the attention to detail, volumetric construction of forms, light effects and chiaroscuro. In the following year Lennie Mol proposed the more cautious formula "school of Francesco Squarcione" for the painting being presented here.<sup>14</sup> Liselot

Jong-Janssen also preferred to classify the painting as a work of Squarcione's *bottega*, though she did not exclude its execution by Pizolo.<sup>15</sup> Andrea De Marchi, in turn, argued the direct paternity of Squarcione on several occasions.<sup>16</sup> Initially he adopted the thesis of "faithful copies of a lost Lippi".<sup>17</sup> With reference to the Walters version, he identified precise affinities with the profile of the Virgin and the draperies of the saints

in the De Lazara polyptych (fig. 5). As for the Alana version, due to its pronounced volumetric accentuation, he associated it with the *Madonna and Child* no. 27 in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin (fig. 2), the only painting signed by Squarcione that has come down to us. Mauro Lucco judged the version now in the Alana Collection coeval with that in Baltimore.<sup>18</sup> He was cautious about accepting the proposed attribution to Squarcione, due to the Lippesque character of the two works; equally he was disinclined to accept *in toto* the proposed attribution to Pizolo, other than the chronological clue contained in it.

The direct attribution of the Walters panel to Pizolo was supported, in a more detailed and circumstantial way, by Alberta De Nicolò Salmazo, who, at the same time, proposed a different solution to the attribution of the version described here.<sup>19</sup> After having carefully analyzed the state of conservation of the much restored Walters panel and its pictorial technique, in her view different from that of the authenticated works of Squarcione, she detected in it a fundamental shift – "intellectual rather than expressive" – in Pizolo's manner, stimulated by the influence exerted on him by Donatello's Paduan works.<sup>20</sup> So, in De Nicolò Salmazo's interpretation, dependence on a Lippesque model is explicitly downplayed, in favor of a Donatellian one. The proposed dating coinciding with the start of the decoration of the Ovetari chapel is justified, in her view, by affinities, both in design and in plastic values, with the figure of the *Blessing God the Father* in the half-dome of the apse (fig. 3) and, among the *Doctors of the Church*, especially with the *St. Gregory the Great*. More particularly, she identifies the phase as that of Andrea Mantegna's *St. Mark* (Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt), which immediately preceded the start of the partnership between Mantegna and Pizolo. As regards the version being presented here, it is, according to Alberta De Nicolò Salmazo, a "simplified redaction and therefore different from the more complex and sophisticated vocabulary – compositional, decorative and pictorial – that characterizes the Baltimore version".<sup>21</sup> The cartoon of this latter, she argues, was acquired by the

workshop of Squarcione, which is known to have been furnished with a large stockpile of models and drawings and frequented by innumerable young painters, some of whom seem to have gained possession of them.<sup>22</sup> On this basis she proposes to assign the Alana version to "a master with very close ties to Squarcione but, it seems, already familiar with the expressive modes of Schiavone". It should be dated, in her view, to the second half of the

1450s, roughly a decade later than the Baltimore version, when one of Squarcione's pupils, namely Schiavone, could have replicated Pizolo's cartoon. Similar arguments are adopted by Stefano G. Casu to confirm the attribution of the Alana panel to Schiavone. He attributes a highly representative value to it: that of a "trial piece", at the time Pizolo entered the workshop of Squarcione, to whom he seems implicitly to assign the Walters version.<sup>23</sup>



Fig. 3. Nicolò Pizolo, *God the Father*. Formerly Padua, Eremitani, Ovetari chapel.

The *Madonna and Child* now in the Alana Collection appeared as a work of Squarcione on the art market in New York in 2007; and the attribution of both versions to this artist has more recently been defended anew by Andrea De Marchi, who sees the Baltimore *Madonna* damaged but on the whole in a more uncontaminated condition than the painting being discussed here. He now proposes, however, a different dating for the two versions of the composition.<sup>24</sup> Thus the *Madonna and Child* in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (no. A 3124), which is generally assigned to Schiavone and was the point of reference to attribute the Alana panel to him, is now proposed by De Marchi as the earliest work in Squarcione's catalogue, dating to the early 1440s.<sup>25</sup> The Walters version would in his view be datable a little later, to the mid-1440s, followed by the Alana *Madonna*, assigned to c.1446-1450. The Walters version, according to De Marchi, does not "present draperies tautened and incised by metallic folds", and in this respect differs from Pizolo's works that are "full of vitality and energetically shaped".<sup>26</sup> In his view the painting implies Squarcione's reconsideration of the Lippesque model at the time of Donatello's presence in Padua in the mid-1440s. De Marchi underlines, indeed, familiarity with specific Donatellian sources that can, he believes, be grasped in it.

So, the names of Squarcione, Pizolo and Schiavone have been recurrently cited, over the years, as candidates for the paternity of the Walters and Alana panels. Recent contributions to the catalogues of each of these masters have not added – in the judgment of the present writer – any new evidence that might determine a definite solution to the problem of attribution, i.e. based on unpublished data, in spite of some new attributions proposed, in the context either of a 'restrictionist' revision of the catalogue of Squarcione or an 'expansionist' revision of that of Pizolo.<sup>27</sup> In particular, research on Pizolo in his role as sculptor, while it has increased our understanding of its importance, does not offer any direct corroborative evidence to help us solve the problem of attribution posed by our two panels. A more detailed and

targeted analysis of the painting technique of the Alana *Madonna*, which seems easier to evaluate in its state of conservation, could offer more suitable results for comparison than the more severely damaged Walters version. In particular, its minute pictorial integration, which especially concerns the flesh parts and which has lent greater polish especially to the Virgin's face, needs to be taken into account. On the other hand, the extensive damage suffered by the Walters panel, clearly visible in the reflectography published by De Nicolò Salmazo, makes comparison between the two paintings difficult.<sup>28</sup>

To sum up, while the ascertainment of paternity is still based today on the evaluation of findings already brought to our attention by the long art-historical process of examining and comparing the two panels, further scrutiny of this evidence is still needed. It should be conducted in the context of masters and works placed in a phase of extraordinary and unrepeatable propulsion in Paduan painting determined by the advent of Donatello. The Lippesque character of the two *Madonnas* has also been repeatedly underlined in the literature, especially with reference to the group of the Virgin and Child in the Tarquinia *Madonna* (Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, no. 5054; see p. 158, fig. 1), painted by Lippi for Cardinal Vitelleschi in 1437 (the date inscribed on the base of its throne). It is characterized, in this case, by a deliberately heightened and hyper-expressive qualification of the anatomy and physiognomy of the Child, somewhat disproportionate in size compared with his mother.<sup>29</sup> This strong expressive charge, and the attempt to confer vitality on the image, to which the Child's gesture also corresponds, seems more pronounced in the Walters and Alana panels than in the saints of Squarcione's De Lazara polyptych. If we examine the group of paintings assigned to Squarcione in a previous phase, we find that the Lippesque component is expressed in an undeniable, and in some way similar, manner in the more delicate *Madonna and Child surrounded by cherubs* formerly in the Post Collection in London, which has been attributed in the past both to Schiavone and Squarcione,

and is now assigned in the main to the Master of the Arzignano Polyptych.<sup>30</sup> Affinities with the art of the young Filippo Lippi have been detected both in the physiognomic "deformations" of the cherubs in the former Post Collection *Madonna* and its very peculiar, almost raking light, as if it were the translation of a high polychrome relief into a two-dimensional painting. These features can be considered the sign of a Lippesque component in Squarcione's style. It can further be shown that this Lippesque component of the De Lazara polyptych was destined to be replaced by a vision of unequivocally Donatellian inspiration in the only work signed by Squarcione, the *Madonna and Child* no. 27 in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin (fig. 2). Here Squarcione tried to conform to this Donatellian matrix while at the same time conferring a highly personal character on the expression of the Christ Child. That the Berlin panel followed the completion of the De Lazara polyptych, i.e. c.1455, leads us to speak of a Lippesque revival in Squarcione's workshop in a phase successive to this; it can thus be grasped especially in the work of pupils who were working in his *bottega* at the time.<sup>31</sup> This revival should not be confused with the ways in which the Lippesque component is expressed in Paduan painting shortly after Fra Filippo's stay in the city in the 1430s.<sup>32</sup> The timescale for this revival of the influence of the Florentine painter can mainly be deduced from the chronological sequence of Giorgio Schiavone's works: in particular from the first signs of it perceptible in the *Madonna and Child* in the Musée des Arts Decoratifs in Paris and the version, its whereabouts now unknown, based on the use of the same cartoon, compared with the abovementioned *Madonna and Child* in the Museo Correr, and that in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, for which an attribution to the Dalmatian master has been preferred.<sup>33</sup> An even more deliberate Lippesque component can be detected in Schiavone's subsequent works, characterized by a more dynamic and expressive style, an ever more brilliant polychromy and a playful rendering of details within a heightened sense of spaciousness, for the most part defined by

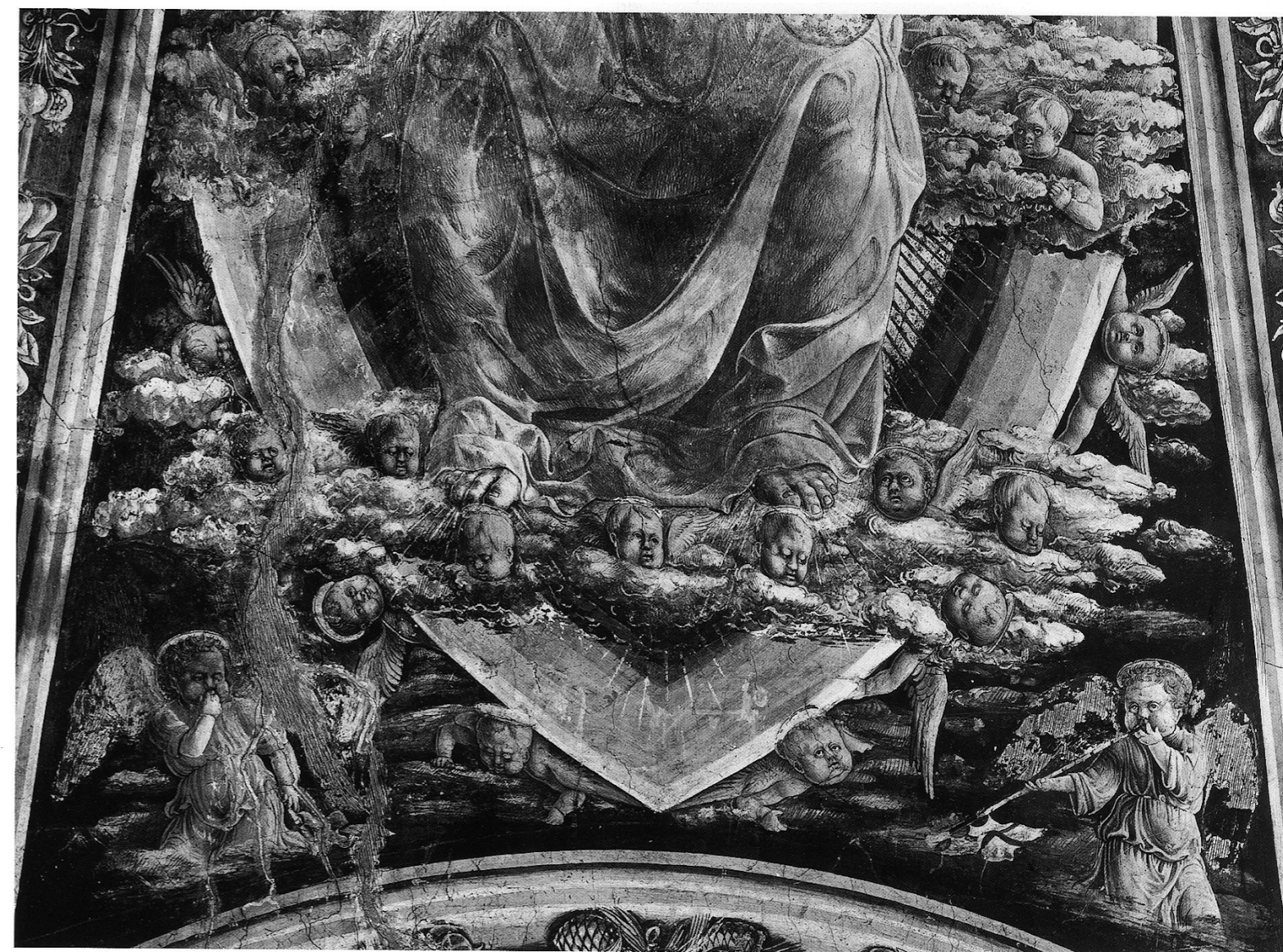


Fig. 4. Nicolò Pizolo, *God the Father* (detail of fig. 3).

architectural frames. We may hazard the conclusion that the considerable chronological gap proposed between the Walters and Alana panels reflects this situation, whether we attribute them both to Squarcione, or attribute the one to Pizolo and the other to the circle of Schiavone. The analogies with the saints of the De Lazara polyptych, with their space-creating movements, their contrapposto stances, can be confirmed. The study of draperies and their volumetric treatment, especially in the way of closing them in ovoidal forms, is also a valid term of comparison. Comparison with the De Lazara polyptych, in which a more than sculptural effect in drapery treatment is achieved, also permits us to grasp the more resolute volumetric mod-

eling and more energetic perspective in the group of the *Madonna and Child* in both the Alana and Baltimore versions. Though the design of the draperies is also similar to that in Squarcione's polyptych, their chromatic values and chiaroscuro are different: the colors are more brilliant, the effects of light more methodically pursued, the chiaroscuro articulated with more robust volumetric effects. The yellow drape that envelops the Child assumes a more jagged and nervous connotation; the reflections of light are more quivering. Consistent with these results is the virtuoso interest in the rendering of transparencies – as in the veil draped over the balustrade on which the Christ Child is sitting – that would be difficult to find in

Squarcione's unquestionable works.

As regards the spatial relation established between the figures and the background, whether it be in gold or characterized by the continuity of trees, as in the case of the Alana version, we may note a kind of coherence with the sophisticated, and in some sense contradictory, background of the St. Jerome in the De Lazara polyptych. Here the opening up of the landscape on a diagonal axis is combined with other perspective devices suggested by the ruined architecture silhouetted against the gold ground of the gable. Even more forcefully, the symbolic value assigned to the background of trees in our painting acquires a kind of autonomy; the network of branches in some



Fig. 5. Francesco Squarcione, *De Lazara polyptych*. Padua, Museo Civico.

measure suggests the space in which the painting is set, in contrast to the gold ground.

Comparison with the De Lazara polyptych suggests, I believe, that the Walters and Alana versions should be assigned to a different master. The attribution of at least the former to Pizolo would need, however, to be verified in the light of the comparisons drawn above. As already underlined, we cannot do other than compare both versions with the frescoes in the Ovetari chapel that are demonstrably Pizolo's work. Our comparative analysis has so far been based especially on the figural style of the *Blessing God the Father* and the *Doctors of the Church*, mainly in terms of their spatial and volumetric construction, the articulation of their draperies and the peculiar pictorial technique used. The results of this analysis seem sufficiently convincing, in my view, to support an attribution of the two *Madonnas* to Pizolo. An interpretation of them exclusively in a Donatellian key, however legitimate, does not explain the Lippesque component that characterizes the design of the *Madonna and Child* that has been recognized as Pizolo's, at least in the Walters version. In this regard, we ought not to ignore the Lippesque character of the seraphim, cherubim and two angels below that compose the turbulent glory that surrounds the *Blessing God the Father* in a mandorla (fig. 4). In the angel in the lower left we find, as in our *Madonna and Child*, a similar gesture of the Child who raises his fingers to his mouth: a motif, it seems, of Masaccesque derivation mediated by Donatello or by Florentine sculptural examples.<sup>34</sup> Especially in such passages we find correspondences for the quite particular type and hyper-expressive characterization of the Child in our panel. The same can be said for the face of the surviving *Seraph*, detached from the *arco santo*, which should be given to Pizolo.<sup>35</sup> The artist's interest in the rendering of transparencies, which we have admired in the Alana *Madonna*, can be directly appreciated in this figure, if we observe the effect that the almost supernatural light produces on his garment, constructed with a dense network of delicate brushstrokes, in a more compact web than in

the corresponding figure of Mantegna.

The sense of severity and augustness that imbues the *God the Father* and the *Doctors of the Church* attributable to Pizolo seems, however, incompatible with the "more prosaic" expressive dimension of the two panels of the *Madonna and Child* being discussed here. This can be explained at least in part by postulating a Lippesque model that they replicate. The different expressive results are to be understood as a result of Pizolo's maturation, prompted by his involvement in the decoration of the Ovetari chapel and further promoted by his concomitant collaboration with Donatello. Even Mantegna, besides, shows in the frescoing of the Ovetari chapel an extraordinary stylistic disparity if we compare his *St. Mark* with the first frescoes that he completed in the Eremitani in competition with his partner. A comparison between the famous presumed self-portraits of the two protagonists, formerly to the right of the triumphal arch of the Ovetari chapel, shows, among other things, that Mantegna adopts the module of incorporation in a rectangle, while Pizolo adopts a perspective point of view that confirms once again a tendency to deformation characteristic of his early phase, as conjectured here. The *Doctors of the Church* themselves show varying degrees of boldness in pose, such as to make the St. Gregory and St. Ambrose seem more advanced. If we can still see Lippesque reminiscences in Pizolo's *God the Father* alongside more innovative features, the more forthright reception of Donatello's teaching in his altarpiece for the chapel shows that his indebtedness to the art of Fra Filippo has now been overcome.<sup>36</sup> We may deduce, therefore, that the two panels of the *Madonna and Child* should predate the start of the decoration of the Ovetari chapel, though it is in its frescoes that we find the only evidence to enable us to assign them to Pizolo.

Comparison of Pizolo's style with that of Squarcione as expressed in the De Lazara polyptych is less decisive in this chronological context, since the problem of the mutual relation with his partner Mantegna is not yet posed. Such a chronological perspective for Pizolo shortens the chronological gap that has been postulated

between the Walters and Alana versions. The reception of Donatello's teaching on a foundation determined by reminiscences of the Paduan activity of Lippi defines the timeframe as c.1445-1449. This period would have sufficed for the same master to have completed two versions based on the same cartoon. Bearing in mind once again the very different state of conservation in which the two panels need to be judged, we may observe in the Alana version more than a simplification resulting from the recycling of the same cartoon. The painting testifies to the acquisition of a greater monumental composure, matched by a more suffused luminosity and a softer chiaroscuro in the furrowed folds of the draperies.

GIORGIO FOSSALUZZA

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Painted surface 54.5 x 41 cm, panel 61 x 41.5 cm. Cf. Zeri 1976a, p. 204.
- <sup>2</sup> The fruit, a *prunus domestica*, was identified by De Nicolò Salmazo (1999, p. 167, note 44), citing the research of M. Levi D'Ancona (1977, p. 311) for its christological symbolism.
- <sup>3</sup> L. Mol, in Florence 1978b, pp. 131-135, no. 31. This use of a cartoon had already been conjectured by Zeri 1976a, p. 205.
- <sup>4</sup> Schiavone is documented in Squarcione's workshop from 1456 to c.1459.
- <sup>5</sup> Harck 1889, p. 208.
- <sup>6</sup> Berenson 1907, p. 286; A. Venturi 1901-40, VII/3 pp. 46 ff., fig. 29; Berlin 1917, lot 46.
- <sup>7</sup> Amsterdam 1919, no. 69; Amsterdam 1934, no. 330, ill. On Jacques Goudstikker cf. Wiethoff 1981.
- <sup>8</sup> R. van Marle 1934-1935, p. 448.
- <sup>9</sup> *Walters Collection* 1922, no. 519; Berenson 1932, p. 520; *idem* 1936, p. 447; *idem* 1968, I, p. 392 (though now with a question mark for the former Kaufmann-Goudstikker version).
- <sup>10</sup> See Fiocco 1927, pp. 100 ill., 109, 246 (ed. Venice 1959, pp. 55, 118, 127, fig. 81); *idem* 1936, p. 36, fig. 6. Moschetti (1936, p. 48) was doubtful about the attribution to Schiavone. Prijatelj (1960, p. 59) confirmed the attribution for the Walters version, but not for the former von Kauffman (now Alana) version with reference to the type of Virgin. Bottari (1961, p. 315) expressed doubts about the attribution. Bonicatti (1964, pp. 49, 50 note 1) thought that the two versions should date to the same period, in that they both shared Schiavone's "second Lippesque phase", in c.1460.
- <sup>11</sup> Zeri 1976a, pp. 204-205; fig. 30.
- <sup>12</sup> See (e.g.) Wright 1980, p. 357; Wiethoff 1981, pp. 259-260, fig. 28; p. 279, no. 52; Rowlands 1983, vol. I, pp. 30-38; vol. II, fig. 13; Christiansen 1992a, p. 112; Ruda 1993, p. 490; *Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst* 1992, p. 280; C.E. De Jong-Janssen, in De Jong-

Janssen, van Wegen 1995, pp. 120-121, no. 57. De Nicolò Salmazo (1990a, p. 764) lists the two versions being considered here among those attributed to Pizolo.

<sup>13</sup> Boskovits 1977, p. 63 note 29.

<sup>14</sup> L. Mol, in Florence 1978b, pp. 131-135, cat. 31, conjecturing that the model which was evidently influenced by Lippesque features was elaborated in the circle of Squarcione. That would explain the affinities that the figure of the Child allegedly has with Giorgio Schiavone's panel in the Museo Correr in Venice and, later, with that of Bartolomeo Vivarini in the Fogg Art Museum in Cambridge (Mass.).

<sup>15</sup> C.E. de Jong-Janssen, in De Jong-Janssen, van Wegen 1995, pp. 120-129, no. 57.

<sup>16</sup> De Marchi 1996; *idem* 1999a; *idem* 2008.

<sup>17</sup> De Marchi 1995, pp. 83-84, note 30; *idem* 1996, pp. 12-13 note 52; he repeated the same position in 1999, p. 115.

<sup>18</sup> Lucco 1999a, p. 110, note 43.

<sup>19</sup> De Nicolò Salmazo 1999, pp. 159-176.

<sup>20</sup> *Eadem*, pp. 159-160, *passim*, citing the reports of the restoration conducted in 1973. In the upper part of the Walters panel the frame is partially original; De Nicolò Salmazo compared it with the panel of the *Madonna and Child* no. 380 in the Musei Civici di Padua, assigned to Squarcione by Boskovits 1977, pp. 53, fig. 54. She considers the decoration, still gothic in inspiration, of the gold ground of the Walters panel unusual and of transalpine derivation, and argues that the decoration with geometric motifs of the De Lazara polyptych has the same source.

<sup>21</sup> De Nicolò Salmazo 1999, p. 169.

<sup>22</sup> On the method of work in Squarcione's bottega, see Christiansen 1992b, pp. 68-78; Motture 2006. It is worth recalling here the case of the drawing attributed to Pizolo and belonging to Squarcione that was placed at the disposal of Pietro Calzetta in 1466 for the realization of the altarpiece representing the *Mola mistica* for the altar in the Basilica del Santo under the patronage of Bernardo De Lazara. See Hahnloser 1962. For the drawings derived from it, see Callegari 1996, pp. 13, figs. 9-10, 26 note 84. Pizolo's drawings were held in high regard, as is demonstrated by the sale of one of them to Andrea da Mantova in 1451. See Rigoni 1948, doc. VII.

<sup>23</sup> Casu 2000, pp. 39-40.

<sup>24</sup> New York 2007b, lot. 13; A. De Marchi, in Paris 2008b, pp. 61-62, cat. 1.

<sup>25</sup> The Amsterdam panel (thought to be the centerpiece of a ceiling) was exhibited at the Paduan exhibition dedicated to Mantegna. See A. Nante, in Padua 2006, pp. 256-257, cat. 53.

<sup>26</sup> A. De Marchi, in Paris 2008b, pp. 61-62, cat. 1.

<sup>27</sup> In the relatively ample catalogue reconstructed by Boskovits in his essay on Squarcione (1977), a so-called Master of the Arzignano Polyptych was singled out as an autonomous personality in Squarcione's bottega. See De Nicolò Salmazo 1993, p. 106, note 63; Rigoni 1999, pp. 89-99; Carradore 2008. The only addition to Pizolo's catalogue in past years is the *St. Augustine enthroned* in the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris, as proposed by A. Ballarin and motivated by G. Mariani Canova (1974). The proposal, rejected by Boskovits (1977, p. 65 note 39), is accepted by Christiansen (1992a, pp. 100-101, fig. 53), who situated the work in a

phase preceding Pizolo's collaboration with Donatello. Callegari (1996, p. 15, 26 note 42) confirms the attribution, pointing out affinities with the drawing of the *Blessing Christ* in Berlin (Staatliche Museen, no. 5060) conjecturally assigned to Pizolo. This is one of the more recent attributions to the master of major interest: already Kristeller (1902, p. 481) had thought of a pupil of Mantegna, and perhaps Pizolo, as the author of this drawing. This position is shared by Schulze Altcapenberg 1995, 249-250, who points out affinities especially with Schiavone in this study. No plausible reasons can be adduced to assign to Pizolo panel no. 1779 in the Musei Civici of Padua representing *St. Martin as Bishop*, as supposed by Spiazzi 1979, pp. 35-37, fig. 2; Banzato, in *Da Giotto*, 1989, p. 107. The *St. Jerome* in the Musei de Arte at São Paulo, usually assigned to the young Mantegna, is given to Pizolo by De Nicolò Salmazo 1993, pp. 63-64. An 'expansionist' catalogue of Pizolo is that proposed by Rearick 1999. It has thus come to comprise the drawing with the *Flagellation* and *Studies of nudes* in the Gabinetto dei Disegni degli Uffizi (no. 6347), and consequently the relief known as the *Forzori Altar* in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. To this is added the relief of the *Deposition of Christ* in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna and some pilasters of the screen round the altar of St. Anthony in the Basilica del Santo. Other drawings hitherto attributed to Giovanni Bellini and Alvise Vivarini have also been re-assigned to Pizolo.

<sup>28</sup> De Nicolò Salmazo 1999, p. 165, fig. 125.

<sup>29</sup> A. De Marchi (in Paris 2008b), in particular, sees in the undulating veil on the Madonna's forehead a replication of a motif adopted by Fra Filippo Lippi in his *Madonna and Child* in the Galleria degli Alberti in the Cassa di Risparmio at Prato (inv. 127), a painting assigned to Lippi's Paduan years. Cf. De Marchi 1996, figs. 37-38. It is considered a studio work by Rowlands 1983, p. 140, note 29. De Marchi's paper (1996) can be consulted also for other proposed addenda to Lippi's Paduan catalogue.

<sup>30</sup> Boskovits 1977, pp. 52, 67 note 59, fig. 51 (with an attribution to Squarcione and a dating to c.1450). The Lippesque character appears to have been deduced in this case from Squarcione by a pupil. On this *Madonna* see A. Tartuferi, in Florence 2005a, pp. 88-95; Carradore 2008, pp. 59 ill., p. 70 note 45.

<sup>31</sup> For the dating of the Berlin *Madonna* no. 27, see Boskovits 1977, p. 50.

<sup>32</sup> On this influence see Rowlands 1983; Boskovits 1986, pp. 235-252; Rowlands 1989, pp. 53-83; De Marchi 1996, pp. 5-14.

<sup>33</sup> Boskovits 1977, p. 66, fig. 52 as Squarcione; Casu 2000, pp. 42, 51 note 49, figs. 57-58 as Schiavone.

<sup>34</sup> The resemblance has been noted, in particular, with the relief of Andrea Cavalcanti called *Il Buggiano* in the Sagrestia Vecchia of San Lorenzo in Florence, where the motif of the Child who puts his fingers in his mouth is also found. Cf. De Nicolò Salmazo 1999, p. 175; A. De Marchi, in Paris 2008b. It is also present in works of the atelier of Luca della Robbia and in others assignable to that of Donatello. See Gentilini 1992a, I, pp. 46-47; A.F. Radcliffe, C. Avery, in Florence 1986b, pp. 152-155, cat. nos. 40-41, but it is also found in paintings, e.g. in Lippi's panel in the Museum of Fine Arts at Salt Lake City. See Fusco, 1982.

<sup>35</sup> Shaw, Boccia 1989.

<sup>36</sup> On this question see Mariani Canova 1974; Mariani, in Padua 2006, pp. 182-185, cat. 21. Important positions on typology and style can be found in Gentilini 1992b; Caglioti 1993 (reevaluation of the role of Giovanni da Pisa).

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