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Series editor Ashok Roy

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# Gilding and Illusion in the Paintings of Bernardino Fungai

DAVID BOMFORD, ASHOK ROY AND LUKE SYSON

**I**N 1932, Bernard Berenson classified Bernardino Fungai (1460–1516) as ‘Umbro-Sienese’.<sup>1</sup> Gaetano Milanesi had earlier argued that the painter’s early works adhere to the stylistic tradition of the Sienese Quattrocento, while ‘in his later works, he demonstrates that he has become detached from it [nelle sue più tarde opere ... mostra di essersene alquanto discostato]’.<sup>2</sup> He thus identified a shift from one style to another – or at least a blending of the two – one in which skilled and varied techniques of painting and, especially, gilding were key to the works’ aesthetic appeal, and another, which remained highly decorative, but which contained a new naturalistic imperative, predicated on the example of Umbrian painters, in particular Pintoricchio and Perugino, perhaps even before works by the former could be seen in Siena.<sup>3</sup> This ‘Umbrian’ manner depended increasingly on the use of oil paint, for which Perugino was celebrated throughout Italy. Here was a merged style that enshrined the growing importance of cultural, diplomatic and economic connections between Siena and papal Rome (including, of course, the Umbrian papal states) in the wake of the Piccolomini papacy of Pius II.

Fungai’s career and chronology await a thorough reconsideration. Born in September 1460 into a family from Fungaia, near Siena, he has been thought, by some, to be a pupil of Giovanni di Paolo.<sup>4</sup> However, his first documented activity, already at the age of 21, was as a ‘gharzone’ to Benvenuto di Giovanni on 28 June 1482 – seemingly working with Benvenuto on the grisaille painting of prophets in the drum of the cupola of the Siena Duomo; his individual hand cannot be identified.<sup>5</sup> Fungai’s early Madonnas are to some degree indebted to Benvenuto’s, and that the two artists were pupil and master is entirely possible. After that date, the documentary record is patchy. Fungai was apparently resident in Siena in July 1491, May 1494 and March 1495 when his children by his first marriage were baptised. In December 1494, he painted ceremonial banners with the arms of the Charles VIII, king of France, and his queen; payments were made for both

gold and lapis.<sup>6</sup> In March 1499, he could be found buying land in the *contrada* of Poggio de’ Malavolti, the area that is also associated with Giovanni di Paolo (dal Poggio), which perhaps reinforces the suggestion of a link between the two painters.<sup>7</sup> In the same year he gilded the organ case in Siena cathedral.<sup>8</sup>

The sole secure touchstone for Fungai’s style is the altarpiece from San Nicola al Carmine of 1512 (now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena),<sup>9</sup> which he signed and dated only four years before his death. It shows the Virgin and Child enthroned with angels, with Saints Sebastian, Jerome, Nicholas of Bari and Anthony of Padua. Fungai’s entire oeuvre has been reconstructed on the basis of stylistic affinities between this and what are frequently earlier works; none of his major pictures is now seriously disputed. The *Stigmatisation of Saint Catherine of Siena* altarpiece for the Sienese Oratory of the Confraternity of Santa Caterina in Fontebranda is, for example, universally agreed to be his, and has been dated on the basis of documents (although these do not actually mention the name of the painter). The project for the altarpiece – and an accompanying *gonfalone* (standard) – was proposed in 1493, with the work underway by February 1495 and completed by November 1497 when the altarpiece was still called ‘nuova’.<sup>10</sup> The high altarpiece of Santa Maria dei Servi, also in Siena, is first mentioned in the April 1498 will of Battista Guerrini of Sinalunga, who was to leave the money to pay for it.<sup>11</sup> It was finished by 10 August 1501, when Fungai is stated as being owed 180 florins out of the total of 325.<sup>12</sup> His career seems to have taken off in this period – c.1495–1501 – perhaps held back until then by the existence of several well-established workshops run by his seniors, an older generation of artists, several of whom died around 1500.<sup>13</sup> In the 1480s and early 1490s, he had evidently been content to be subcontracted for work commissioned from others. He contributed figures and the landscape to a story of Orpheus and Eurydice, now in a private collection in Florence, one of a pair of mythological scenes, whose principal artist seems to have been the anonymous ‘Maestro di Stratonice’,<sup>14</sup> a painter close



PLATE 1 Bernardino Fungai, *The Virgin and Child with Cherubim* (NG 1331), here dated c. 1506–10. Panel (tondo), 119.4 × 118.1 cm.

in style to Matteo di Giovanni. And, probably in the mid-1490s, he executed the right side of the central Nativity panel of the Tancredi altarpiece in San Domenico, working under Francesco di Giorgio.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, Alessandro Angelini has convincingly argued that Fungai may have been one of a group of Sienese painters assisting Pintoricchio in his decoration of the Borgia apartments at the Vatican, work that was well underway by December 1493.<sup>16</sup> This putative early contact might explain why Pintoricchio was stylistically so important for Fungai.

As Carolyn Wilson has written: ‘Fungai’s abundant use of gold is noteworthy in sumptuous damasks and in painted areas incised to reveal gilding ... he may have had a reputation for his adept handling of expen-

sive materials.’<sup>17</sup> This technique is exemplified in his tondo *The Virgin and Child with Cherubim* (NG 1331), painted on panel (PLATE 1),<sup>18</sup> and remarkable for a particular aspect of its gilding technique. The Virgin and Child are seated on a golden throne with, behind them, scenes from the narrative of the the Nativity in a brilliantly sketchy (but controlled) landscape background – the procession of the Magi on the right, the Annunciation to the Shepherds on the far left (in the middle ground), and in front on the left the Adoration of the Child.<sup>19</sup> In this last scene, the Virgin is dressed – according to the traditional iconography – in a red dress and dark blue mantle, her ‘worldly’ dress. In the primary image, however, she somewhat unusually wears a white and gold cloak. In standard Marian



PLATE 2 *The Virgin and Child with Cherubim* (NG 1331). Detail of the Virgin's *sgraffito* drapery.



PLATE 3A *The Virgin and Child with Cherubim* (NG 1331). Paint cross-section of a *sgraffito* area of the Virgin's white and gold drapery, showing a layer of white paint over gold leaf. An orange-brown layer of bole is present beneath the gold, and gesso below that. Original magnification 220 $\times$ ; actual magnification 170 $\times$ .

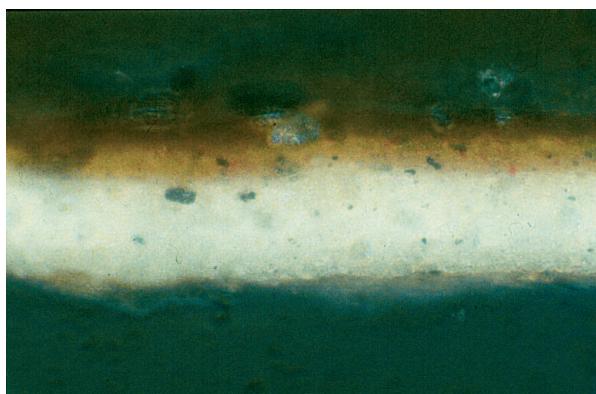


PLATE 3B *The Virgin and Child with Cherubim* (NG 1331). Paint cross-section of the orange-brown design on a greyish area of the Virgin's drapery, executed purely in paint. The upper layer represents the design over a pale grey paint; gesso lies directly beneath. Original magnification 220 $\times$ ; actual magnification 170 $\times$ .

imagery, the throne refers to her role, after her Assumption, as the Queen of Heaven. And in Siena the image of the Virgin Assunta was of extraordinary significance; this white and gold costume is the traditional garb of the Virgin Mary at the moment of her Assumption – the most important feast day for the city.<sup>20</sup> So Fungai's tondo not only presents the Virgin as both the Bride of Christ and the Queen of Heaven at the same time, but turns her into a particularly Sienese protectress.

In painting this startlingly prominent white cloak with its gold pattern and red hem, Fungai employed a type of illusionism that seems to be unique to his works, and that draws special attention to this part of the picture. The cloak is rendered with the traditional technique of *sgraffito* (PLATE 2). Described in Cennino Cennini's *Il Libro dell'Arte*, this method for depicting rich cloth-of-gold fabrics followed a well-established sequence.<sup>21</sup> On a gessoed panel, preparatory reddened bole and gold leaf were applied across the marked-out area of the drapery; the main colour layer of the fabric (white paint in the present example) was applied on top of the gilding. The paint layer was then scraped away with a fine wooden implement before the paint was completely hard in order to expose the pre-determined gold pattern. Finally, the exposed areas of gold leaf were tooled and incised to give them detail that sparkled and shone as they caught the light. Repeating patterns for *sgraffito* designs were commonly made using stencils or pounced cartoons. The palmate pattern favoured by Fungai seems to have been similarly reproduced in this manner for his draperies.

In the *Virgin and Child with Cherubim*, Fungai employed a novel variation to the normal *sgraffito* method.<sup>22</sup> First he scrupulously divided the white drapery into its lit and shadowed parts, and the areas that were intended to be lit were gilded. The gold leaf was then covered with white paint, and the shadows painted in a warm grey tone directly onto the gesso (PLATES 3A and B). While still soft, the paint was scraped away to reveal the gold pattern in the white, lit areas; in the grey, shadowed areas, the pattern was simply painted in a dull orange-brown colour (PLATE 4). On close examination, the transition between the two techniques is striking. As the repeating palmate design passes from light into shadow, gold gives way to orange-brown paint. In some places, a single lobe begins as exposed gold and is completed in paint (PLATE 5). On a smaller scale, the red hem of the robe, too, is differentiated between a transparent red over gold in the lights and a darker red with a painted pattern in the shadows.

The reason for this unusual adaptation of traditional *sgraffito* becomes clear when the surface of the painting is viewed with light striking it at an angle – as possibly was the case in its original setting. When light is reflected from the surface, the areas with bright gold patterning appear to leap forward, while the areas with orange-brown paint recede (PLATES 6A



PLATE 4 *The Virgin and Child with Cherubim* (NG 1331). Close detail of the palmette pattern on the Virgin's drapery.



PLATE 5 *The Virgin and Child with Cherubim* (NG 1331). Macro detail of a single lobe of the palmette pattern on the Virgin's drapery.

and b). The resulting illusion of three-dimensional drapery is highly effective – and this was undoubtedly Fungai's intention. It is significant that one of the few panels by Fungai to remain *in situ*, the *Coronation of the Virgin with Saints Sigismund, John the Baptist, Jerome and Roch* (FIG. 1) in the church of Santa Maria di Fontegiusta, Siena, which has a related type of illusionistic gilding (although not identical; see below) is illuminated obliquely through a nearby window early in the morning and through three windows in the opposite wall later in the day (in the absence of any documentary evidence, however, we cannot be absolutely sure that this was its original location).<sup>23</sup>

The use of the *sgraffito* technique for depicting sumptuous draperies was common in Sienese painting during the fifteenth century. In early examples, the design was purely flat, without any variation to suggest folds in the material: transparent darker shadows were simply painted over the regular pattern. Towards the mid-century, particularly in the works of Giovanni di Paolo, a more sophisticated approach becomes evident, in which design correctly follows form. A notable example of this more naturalistic rendering of drapery is Giovanni di Paolo's 1475 'Staggia Altarpiece' (Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale) in which the Virgin wears a robe of grey and white, exquisitely decorated with gold *sgraffito*: here, the pattern stops at the sharp edges of folds, and resumes naturally in a different position and at a different angle where it emerges from the fold (PLATE 7). This precedent is worth considering in the light of the uncertainty surrounding Fungai's training.

However, nowhere else in Sienese painting of the period do we find the complexity of Fungai's illusionism. Some Sienese painters – Matteo di Giovanni and Francesco di Giorgio, for example – used a related technique for gold-patterned draperies, in which the design was superimposed on the colour layers with mordant gilding in the lights and duller yellow-brown paint or uncovered mordant in the shadows.<sup>24</sup> This indeed was the technique employed by Fungai himself in his Fontegiusta altarpiece, where the pattern on the Virgin's white robe is painted out in brown mordant, which is similarly left dark and exposed in the shadows and only covered with gold in the lights, and it occurs also on Christ's darkened azurite cloak. The intention was again to render the highlights more prominent than the shadows, but it was much less effective than Fungai's unique form of adapted *sgraffito*, described above for the National Gallery tondo,<sup>25</sup> a technique that he repeated, with some variation, in a number of altarpieces still to be seen in Siena. It seems possible to propose some sort of chronology for these



PLATES 6 A AND B *The Virgin and Child with Cherubim* (NG 1331). Detail of the Virgin's drapery in both normal and raking light.

works, based on the development of his technique in general and his illusionism in particular.

Fungai was painting at the time when the egg-tempera medium was giving way to oil in Italy, and he makes this transition in the years around 1500–4. Analysis has shown that the National Gallery tondo is executed principally in a medium of walnut oil, although there is evidence, particularly from the condition of the flesh paints, that Fungai may not have been wholly used to the character of the oil medium at this point in his career.<sup>26</sup> In an early work, *The Assumption of the Virgin* (Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale), painted largely in the clearly visible hatched strokes that are typical of egg tempera, the Virgin's robe has the familiar white and gold *sgraffito*, but it is relatively simply constructed.<sup>27</sup> The palmate pattern follows the form in the deepest folds but not in the shallower indentations. More importantly, the *sgraffito* is wholly of the conventional kind and there is no transition into a painted pattern in the shadows. Interestingly, the layer of gilding below the robe here extends across a much larger area than just the drapery itself. Fungai water-gilded the panel in a great oval around the Virgin, using it for the rays of gold

scratched through the blue of the sky and for the gilded draperies of the musical angels at the left and right sides.

Fungai's 1512 panel *The Virgin and Child Enthroned* from the Carmine (Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale), was almost certainly painted in oil (fig. 2). The passage in this work most relevant to the present discussion is the white cloth-of-honour hanging beneath the Virgin's throne, where we see the familiar repeated motif of the white-over-gold palmate pattern. In this case, however, the fabric is represented as flat, without shadows, and the *sgraffito* is straightforward, and not variegated. As in the other examples of the technique, the exposed gold leaf is hatched with incised lines running diagonally from right to left. Although now rather worn, the patterning on the Virgin's blue robe consists of mordant gilding with the brown mordant left ungilded in the shadows, as in the Fontegiusta panel. Thickly applied mordant gilding is used for the simpler linear haloes of the cherubim in the London tondo, and more delicate work in mordant gilding highlights the cherubim's wings, the edging of the Virgin's veil and the upper part of her cloak.

The largest and most complex of Fungai's Sienese



FIG. 1 Bernardino Fungai, *The Coronation of the Virgin with Saints Sigismund, John the Baptist, Jerome and Roch*, 1506–10. Panel. Siena, Santa Maria di Fonte Giusta.

altarpieces is the *Coronation of the Virgin*, painted for the high altar of Santa Maria dei Servi (PLATE 8), where the main panel remains *in situ*. In this work, the Virgin's white robe is identical in technique to the London tondo – the palmette pattern set out with conventional *sgraffito* in the lit areas and with orange-brown paint over grey in the shadows. Some areas of the pattern are divided between light and shadow exactly as in the London panel. The exposed gold is also tooled in the same diagonal manner and direction.<sup>28</sup> As elsewhere in Fungai's work, a variety of other gilding techniques are employed in the *Coronation*, including the use of draperies patterned with brown mordant touched with gold leaf on the highlighted areas and left ungilded in the shadows, Christ's ultramarine drapery being a case in point.

The close resemblance of the key *sgraffito* passages in the Santa Maria dei Servi *Coronation* and the London tondo and the general handling of figure shape, flesh tones and so on, suggest that the two paintings may be relatively close in conception and date; the *Coronation* has traditionally been dated to around 1498–1501. Nevertheless, Pèleo Bacci draws attention to similarities between the white cloths-of-gold in the *Coronation* and the *Virgin and Child Enthroned* of 1512 from the Carmine (and, by implica-



PLATE 7 Giovanni di Paolo, the centre panel from *The Assumption of the Virgin and Saints Bernard, John the Baptist, George and Gregory the Great* ('La Pala di Staggia'), 1475. Panel, approx. 199 × 210 cm overall. Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale.



FIG. 2 Bernardino Fungai *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints*, Carmine Altarpiece, signed and dated 1512. Panel, 315 × 208 cm. Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

tion, the National Gallery tondo), showing that Fungai continued to employ much this technique throughout the latter part of his career.<sup>29</sup> The London tondo has a further connection with the Carmine panel: the throne and the Christ Child in each appear to have been based on the same drawing (reversed for the Carmine painting). A date for the London panel of c.1501–12 would therefore seem the safest conclusion. However, one aspect of the three works changes quite considerably in these eleven years – their landscapes – a feature that may make a more precise dating possible. The Servi *Coronation* retains a piece-meal landscape constructed with each individual element carefully and crisply isolated within it, notably the fern-like fronds standing for trees, sometimes with little regard for relative scale and often set against what resembles a sequence of theatre flats. This bright, cool style of landscape, inspired to no small degree by Pintoricchio, had been standard for Fungai in the 1490s. It can be observed, for example, in his Saint Clement predella panels, now divided between York and Strasbourg, probably originally part of the

Servi altarpiece, and also in his several bedchamber pictures of the life of Scipio Africanus, usually (though not universally) dated to the mid to late 1490s.<sup>30</sup> However, in the London tondo Fungai has thoroughly realised the possibilities afforded by the use of an oil medium to paint with greater freedom (even scratching into the surface when still wet to indicate the paths in the background), blending the paint to achieve a more convincing aerial perspective. The colour has consequently become more unified, giving a lovely autumnal mood to the work. Fungai was possibly inspired to experiment by the landscape in Perugino's *Crucifixion* altarpiece in Sant' Agostino, installed by 1506.<sup>31</sup> By the time of the Carmine altarpiece, however, this sketchiness has become almost exaggerated, moving away once again from a naturalistic approach. Bruce Cole has pointed out that Fungai's oil paint had by then attained a fluidity that anticipates the technique of Domenico Beccafumi.<sup>32</sup> The controlled animation and persuasive naturalism of the landscape in the tondo are in fact stylistically closest to the Fontegiusta altarpiece. It would therefore seem reasonable to place the London tondo and the Fontegiusta *Coronation* between the Santa Maria dei Servi *Coronation* and the Carmine altarpiece and therefore to date both these two first works to c.1506–10.

Fungai's inventive and novel treatment of draperies that combine *sgraffito* with equivalent painted passages for areas of shadow is not the only decorative effect achieved with gold to be seen in his panels: all the works discussed here also involve other gilding techniques. Both water-gilding, treated differently from the *sgraffito* method, and mordant gilding were used extensively for draperies and in other features, not only for their particular decorative effect, but also for their impact when used in conjunction with the *sgraffito* designs. In the National Gallery tondo, for example, the Virgin's dress consists of a flat area of water-gilding, laid on over a red-brown bole at the same time as those areas to be developed in *sgraffito*. This gold leaf was next densely stippled with a simple metal punch and finally decorated with a finely drawn arabesque pattern in a red lake glaze paint, with the shadows of the gold fabric modelled in brownish glazes on the sleeve and bodice.<sup>33</sup> Interestingly, the passages representing the red and gold dress where it passes into shadow at the Virgin's feet, and to the right of the Christ Child, are constructed from flat yellow-brown paints over which the red lake arabesque design is continued. The upper part of the dress, with its exposed tooled gold leaf, and the sections in shadow, where only paint is employed, therefore echo



PLATE 8 Bernardino Fungai, *The Coronation of the Virgin*, 1498–1501. Panel. Siena, Santa Maria dei Servi.

the concept of the *sgraffito* and paint conjunction of the white and gold mantle (PLATE 9). Closely comparable techniques are found on others of Fungai's works. In the Fontegiusta altarpiece, for example, the Virgin's underdress, parts of the costume of Saint Sigismund to the left and the sleeves of several of the angels in heaven are created using red lake arabesque designs over water-gilding in just the same way as the Virgin's dress in the London tondo. In addition, the hem of Sigismund's drapery continues the gold and red lake pattern onto a band of orange-brown paint with a red lake design, in the same way as shadow areas of the Virgin's dress do in the London picture. In the gilded parts of the latter's drapery, the gold leaf underlies only the highlighted folds of fabric. Equivalent techniques in translucent red, gold and orange-brown for cloth-of-gold draperies occur in both the *Coronation of the Virgin* in Santa Maria dei Servi and the Carmine *Virgin and Child Enthroned* in which the technique is used for Saint Nicholas of Bari's robe.

Water-gilding is used in other contexts. It is employed, for example, for the haloes of the Virgin and the Christ Child in the London tondo, which are depicted as solid golden ovals. Here the gold leaf is heavily inscribed with radial lines, and triangular radiating sectors of the haloes are marked out with translucent red glazes.<sup>34</sup> In the Fontegiusta panel, deep



PLATE 9 *The Virgin and Child with Cherubim* (NG 1331). Detail showing the upper part of the Virgin's inner dress with gilding and red lake design to the left and a painted section, without gilding, in the shadow area.

incisions in the gold leaf radiate from the centre of the sun inscribed as concentric circular lines made with compasses; and the effulgence emanating from the Holy Ghost, represented as an oval patch of water-gilding, is similarly incised, the rays in this case continuing into the surrounding paint of the sky as lines of mordant gilding on a thickly applied adhesive.

Fungai's allegiance to the Sienese taste for beautifully patterned cloth-of-gold textiles, and his use of a great variety of techniques to exploit the reflective capacity of gold leaf, are perhaps seen to best advantage and in most elaborated form in his Servi high altarpiece, but the London tondo is almost its equal. Fungai's unique contribution to advancing the expression of decorative richness was his construction of draperies wrought in *sgraffito* work, combined with painted passages that create both an unusual three-dimensional quality and a shimmering effect when the light strikes the surface at an angle (it must also have been especially impressive in candlelight). The costume of the Virgin in the National Gallery painting is a particularly attractive and well-preserved example of Fungai's use of this very specific and apparently personal gilding technique. It is a technique that celebrates the traditional craft virtues associated with Sienese painting, while imbuing them with a greater naturalism, and is entirely in keeping with his self-consciously more modern, 'Umbrian' style.

## Notes

- 1 Bernard Berenson, *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance*, Oxford 1932, p. 211.
- 2 Gaetano Milanesi, *Sulla storia dell'arte Toscana. Scritti vari*, Siena 1873, pp. 54–5.
- 3 The final payments for Perugino's Crucifixion altarpiece in Sant' Agostino, a Chigi commission, were made in 1506. See Pietro Scarpellini, *Perugino*, Milan 1984, pp. 112–13, cat. 141. Pintoricchio moved to Siena in 1503/4, to decorate the Piccolomini Library, remaining there until his death in 1513. See Pietro Scarpellini and Maria Rita Silvestrelli, *Pintoricchio*, Milan 2003, pp. 233–81, esp. p. 234.
- 4 For example, Berenson, 1932 (cited in note 1), p. 211.
- 5 Pèleo Bacci, *Bernardino Fungai: pittore senese (1460–1516)*, Siena 1947, pp. 12–13.
- 6 Bacci 1947 (cited in note 5) pp. 15–16, 35–6.
- 7 Bacci 1947 (cited in note 5) pp. 37–8.
- 8 Bacci 1947 (cited in note 5) p. 38.
- 9 OPUS BERNARDINI FONGARII DE SENIS 1512. See Piero Torriti, *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena. I dipinti*, Genoa 1990, pp. 331–2, cat. 431.
- 10 Bacci 1947 (cited in note 5), pp. 51–4.
- 11 Bacci 1947 (cited in note 5), pp. 89–90.
- 12 Bacci 1947 (cited in note 5), p. 94: 'Anno Domini MCCCCCI, indictione IV, die vero 10 mensis augusti. Cum sit quod Bernardinus Nicolai de Fongariis fuerit et sit creditor Fratrum Capituli et Conventus sancte Marie Servorum de Senis in florenos centum octuaginta ... pro residuo florenorum 325 sibi debitorum, ex causa sui salarii et mercedis seu manifere tabule altaris maioris dicte Ecclesie constructe et pictae per eundem Bernardinum omnibus ipsius Bernardini sumptibus et expensis.'
- 13 Pietro Orioli died (at an early age) in 1496, Matteo di Giovanni in 1495, Neroccio de' Landi in 1500, Francesco di Giorgio in 1501/2 and Pietro di Domenico in 1502, leaving the field clear for a younger generation.
- 14 Aldo Galli in L. Bellosi, ed., *Francesco di Giorgio e il Rinascimento a Siena, 1450–1500*, exh. cat., Chiesa di Sant' Agostino, Siena (Milan 1993), p. 280, cat. 50b; Gigetta Dalli Regoli, 'I pittori nella Lucca di Matteo Civitali. Da Michele Ciampanti a Michele Angelo di Pietro' in AA.VV., *Matteo Civitali e il suo tempo. Pittori, scultori e orafi a Lucca nel tardo Quattrocento*, exh. cat., Museo Nazionale di Villa Guinigi, Lucca (Milan 2004), pp. 95–141, esp. p. 109. It remains uncertain whether this anonymous master is the same painter as Michele Ciampanti from Lucca. Fungai's involvement with these panels makes it unlikely that they can be dated as early as c.1470–5. In perhaps 1487 Fungai painted an *Assumption of the Virgin* still *in situ* in the convent of San Girolamo, Siena, to complete an ensemble usually (though not necessarily correctly) thought to have been started by the Ghirlandaio-esque painter Fra Giuliano da Firenze. See Marcella Parisi in L. Bellosi, ed., 1993, p. 521.
- 15 Alessandro Angelini in L. Bellosi, ed. (cited in note 14), pp. 478–80, cat. 107b, who argues that Fungai may have completed the picture started by Lodovico Scotti, the latter working from cartoons by Francesco di Giorgio. It may in fact be the case that the two painters worked simultaneously on the picture under Francesco di Giorgio's direction, Fungai returning to work again on the main panel when he came to execute the predella, which stylistically resembles those panels thought to have belonged with the 1498–1501 Servi altarpiece. For these latter see Laurence B. Kanter, *Painting in Renaissance Siena, 1420–1500*, exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 1988, pp. 353–8, cat. 76a–d.
- 16 Alessandro Angelini, 'Pinturicchio e i pittori senesi. Dalla Roma dei Borgia alla Siena di Pandolfo Petrucci' in M. Caciorgna, R. Guerrini and M. Lorenzoni, ed., *Studi interdisciplinari sul Pavimento del Duomo di Siena: iconografia, stile, indagini scientifiche. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studi (Siena, Chiesa della SS. Annunziata, 27 e 28 settembre 2002)*, Siena 2005, pp. 83–99, esp. pp. 94–5. Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2003 (cited in note 3), p. 286, doc. 57.
- 17 Carolyn C. Wilson, 'Fungai, Bernardino' in J. Turner, ed., *The Dictionary of Art*, XI, London 1996, p. 842.
- 18 Martin Davies, *The Earlier Italian Schools, National Gallery Catalogues*, rev. edn, London 1961, pp. 206–7. The picture was cleaned and restored by David Bomford in 2004.
- 19 This little scene seems to derive from a standard composition used by Fungai and his workshop for autonomous panels, most notably in the *Nativity with Saints Francis and Jerome* in San Secondiano, Chiusi. See also the *Nativity* in the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford (1962.445) – a work of the late 1490s – and the *Nativity* sold by Sotheby's in the Earl of Haddington Sale, 8 December 1971, lot 35, perhaps closer in date to the London tondo. See Jean K. Cadogan in Cadogan, ed., *Wadsworth Atheneum Paintings II. Italy and Spain. Fourteenth through Nineteenth Centuries*, Hartford 1991, pp. 146–7.

- 20 Diana Norman, *Siena and the Virgin: Art and Politics in a Late Medieval City State*, New Haven and London 1999, pp. 3 and 209.
- 21 Cennino Cennini's recommendations for the execution of *sgraffito* draperies are given in F. Brunello, ed., *Il Libro dell'Arte di Cennino Cennini*, 2nd edn, Vicenza 1982, CXLI and CXLII, pp. 143–5; see also David Bomford et al., *Art in the Making: Italian Painting before 1400*, exh. cat., National Gallery, London 1989, pp. 130–4.
- 22 First noted by J. Plesters, 'Gold in European Easel Paintings', *The Whiley Monitor*, December 1963, p. 8.
- 23 This picture is not to be confused, as it was in the past, with Girolamo di Benvenuto's 1515 vault painting above the high altar of Santa Maria di Fontegiusta, which was an *Assumption*. See Gaetano Milanesi, *Documenti per la storia dell'arte senese*, III, Siena 1856, p. 70, no. 31.
- 24 For example, Matteo di Giovanni's triptych of the *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Angels*, *Saints Jerome and John the Baptist* and Francesco di Giorgio's *Adoration of the Shepherds* (as we have seen, a collaboration with Fungai, who contributed to the main panel and painted the predella; see note 15) both in San Domenico, Siena. Interestingly, in Matteo di Giovanni's altarpiece of the *Assumption of the Virgin* in the National Gallery (NG 1155) the pattern on the hem of Saint Thomas's drapery is also created with mordant gilding, in which the highlights are gilded and the shadows in the folds are left as the ungilded dark brown mordant. It would be misleading to propose that this technique for representing cloth-of-gold brocades is confined to the work of Sienese painters; a similar technique occurs, for example, in Benozzo Gozzoli's National Gallery altarpiece of 1461–2, *The Virgin and Child Enthroned among Angels and Saints* (NG 283), in the depiction of Saint Zenobius's cope.
- 25 Although the bulk of the gold pattern on both the Virgin's drapery and that of Christ in the Fungai altarpiece in the Fontegiusta church is created from gilded and ungilded mordant applied over the body colour of the drapery, uniquely, two small patches in each drapery which directly adjoin the water-gilded heavenly sky are treated with the *sgraffito* technique.
- 26 Examination of samples of the tondo by FTIR and GC-MS has indicated the general use of walnut oil as binding medium, probably heat-bodied in some areas (upper layer of flesh paint, deep green of tree, blue of sky) and non-heat-bodied elsewhere, for example green of grass and landscape paint beneath cherub's flesh. The medium of the Virgin's white robe, treated in *sgraffito*, has been identified as essentially egg tempera. The drying faults evident in the flesh paints of the cherubim arise from the overlap of these upper layers with the surrounding landscape; no reserve had been left for the cherubim. We are most grateful to Catherine Higgitt for her work on these samples.
- 27 Torriti 1990 (cited in note 9), pp. 242–3, cat. 324 (in which, however, it is catalogued as a 'tired' late work). The exquisite gold-ground *Virgin and Child with a Goldfinch* in the Hermitage, St Petersburg, is also in tempera and probably dates to the mid-1490s. See Tatyana K. Kustodieva, *The Hermitage: Catalogue of Western European Painting, Italian Painting, Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries*, Florence 1994, p. 176, cat. 91.
- 28 The authors were able to examine the Servi altarpiece at close quarters in the church. In addition to the general appearance of the *sgraffito* parts of the Virgin's cloak, it was evident that in places the exposed water-gilding had been worn away revealing the bole beneath. This observation confirmed the nature of the technique involved.
- 29 Bacci 1947 (cited in note 5), p. 91.
- 30 Kustodieva 1994 (cited in note 27), p. 175, cat. 90; Marilena Caciorgna, *Il naufragio felice. Studi di filologia e storia della tradizione classica nella cultura letteraria e figurativa senese*, Sarzana 2004, pp. 152–5, 168–84. These works, like others from this period in Fungai's career, are frequently catalogued as having been executed using both oil and egg-tempora paints.
- 31 The works seems significantly less indebted to Pintoricchio, whose landscape comes closest in his 1513 signed and dated canvas of the *Road to Calvary* (Stresa, Borromeo Collection), a work which must surely have been executed after the National Gallery tondo. See Scarpellini and Silvestrelli 2003 (cited in note 3), p. 280.
- 32 Bruce Cole, *Sienese Painting in the Age of the Renaissance*, Bloomington 1985, pp. 142–4.
- 33 The red lake glaze has been identified by Jo Kirby using HPLC as containing both madder and kermes dyestuffs; it is not known, however, whether these pigments were mixed or used in separate layers.
- 34 The red glazes used to decorate the incised haloes are now scarcely visible on the picture, having become seriously worn; however, they are very evident under magnification.